

Constitution & Bylaws
of
Gate II Church
Appling, GA

Revised July 25, 2021

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of
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Appling, GA

Adopted by the membership on September 1, 2019.

Preamble

God Almighty has called some of his servants together to unite here in the year 2019 under the name Gate II Church located in Appling, Georgia, for the express purposes of worshipping God and spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we affirm that He has unified this body of believers for His kingdom work; and

Whereas we, the members of Gate II Church, having through much prayer and searching of the Holy Scriptures having been led by His Spirit, have concluded that it is necessary and in keeping with God's will to constitute ourselves to His will for the Church as revealed through His word and that the timing and urgency of such a constitution is most obvious given the condition of society that has largely turned away from the commands of Christ. Therefore, this body of believers is to come to assemble in preparation to engage the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the goal of completing all the good work that the Lord lays before us;

Now therefore we, the members of Gate II Church, organize and adopt this Constitution and Bylaws as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Statement of Faith (2019) and Member Covenant (2019) of this church.

It is with gratitude to Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington D. C., and First Liberty Institute, and the Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry (CARM) who in Christian love allowed their own documents to be provided as source documents for this document.

Article 1 – Name

The name of this church is: Gate II Church.

Article 2 – Purpose

This church exists by the grace of God alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, as revealed through the Scriptures alone, to the glory of God alone and that being the supreme reason for any and all of its activities.

This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

Worshipping Him;

Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;

Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching, personal

and public evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture;

Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and international;
Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion;
Encouraging biblical fellowship among believers;
Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ; and
Calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement about the nature of the local church.

We are motivated in all facets by our faith in Jesus Christ, attempting to serve as a reflection of God's unconditional love for all people.^[1] We seek to honor the Lord in all that we do by operating Gate II Church in a manner consistent with Biblical principles.^[2] Every activity and speech that Gate II Church or its employees, representatives, volunteers, or members engage in shall be consistent with, and in furtherance of, Gate II Church's religious purposes, both publicly and privately.^[3]

All activities in which Gate II Church engages are for the religious purpose of furthering its Christian mission, message, and viewpoint. Whether the activity has an overt liturgical religious purpose (preaching, worship, Bible instruction, communion, baptism) or a related non-liturgical religious purpose (evangelism, social service activities, weddings, primary and secondary schools, or events), all activities of the Church are intended to glorify God. (Colossians 3:17) Gate II Church conducts all activities in a holistic manner in order to foster, repeat, advertise or express its Christian mission, message and viewpoint.^[4] In this way, every church activity itself is infused with a religious purpose, as an act of worship, intending to further Gate II Church's religious beliefs and commitment to the faith as outlined in any and all written organizational policies, governing documents, handbooks, or procedures, employments policies, Standards of Morals and Conduct, discipline, Statements of Faith, religious beliefs, Purpose Statement, Mission Statement, polity, and internal dispute resolution policy are incorporated herein by reference, as if fully set forth herein.^[5]

Conveying Gate II Church's Christian message is at the heart of all that we do, in life, deed, word and expression. ^[6] Gate II Church is dedicated to serving and providing for its community through christian care and goodwill, not simply to engage in organized worship.^[7] Provision of charity and community services, including but not limited to care for children, widows, and those in need, as well as evangelism, strengthening Christian leadership, discipleship and Biblical education, primary and secondary education, are means of fulfilling Christian duty and providing an example of the Christ-like way of life that Gate II Church seeks to foster. ^[8] (James 1:27; Mark 16:15; Titus 1:7-9; Matthew 28:19-20) Therefore, all behavior of members, representatives, and volunteers of the church is communicative in nature, exemplifying the faith. Associating with like-minded Christians reinforces Gate II Church's Christian purpose and is vital to the faith's perpetuation. ^[9] (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Finally, the primary, exclusive, and only purposes for which Gate II Church is organized are religious in nature, including but not limited to conducting missions and services. Likewise Gate II Church intends to disseminate, teach, and preach the Gospel and teachings of Jesus Christ, to encourage and aid the growth, nurture and spread of Christianity and to render Christ-

ian service. ^[10] The recital of these purposes is intended to be exclusive of any and all other purposes, this church being formed for religious and charitable purposes only.^[11]

^[1] *Spencer v. World Vision, Inc.*, 633 F.3d 723, 735 (9th Cir. 2011).

^[2] *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, 134 S.Ct. 2751, 2766 (2014).

^[3] See *World Vision*, 633 F.3d at 434; *Univ. of Great Falls v. NLRB*, 278 F.3d 1335, 1343 (D.C. Cir. 2002); *Universidad Cent. de Bayamon v. NLRB*, 793 F.2d 383, 399-400, 403 (1st Cir. 1985) (en banc) (Breyer, J.).

^[4] See *Hurley v. Irish-American Gay*, 515 U.S. 557, 581 (1995).

^[5] See *Corp. of Presiding Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints v. Amos*, 483 U.S. 327, 344 (1987) (Brennan, J., concurring).

^[6] See *World Vision*, 633 F.3d at 434.

^[7] See *Amos*, 483 U.S. at 344 (Brennan, J., concurring)

^[8] See *id.*

^[9] See *HEB Ministries, Inc. v. Tex. Higher Educ. Coordinating Bd.*, 235 S.W.3d 627, 659-660, (Tex. 2007)

^[10] See *World Vision*, 633 F.3d at 736.

^[11] See *id.* at 726.; *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602, 628 (1971).

Article 3 – Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ. There should accompany such a profession some evidences of regeneration. Do they possess a love for what Christ has done, do they love God’s people, do they love God’s word? These are examples of what it looks like when a person is regenerated. Absence these and other evidences, it should and will cause elders to pause and spend time with a person who has professed such a faith in Christ. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.

Elders should consider, does this person have an affection for the church, for Christ and His Gospel, for the word of God, and for living in a manner pleasing to God? While new converts to the faith might lack maturity, there ought to be evidences of a converted heart. If a person claims to be converted but lacks love for Christ, or refuses to obey His commandments, or refuses to obey the statement of faith of this church, then the elders should be cautious with that candidate.

On the other hand, when a sinner comes to faith in Christ and professes love for what God has done, and that love is apparent, then the Elders ought to present the candidate with great joy to the congregation. The congregation should then consider affirming such a person by vote of the congregation as a member of the body of Christ and as a member of this local congregation.

Section 2 – Admission of Members

This church is a Reformed Baptist Church, and as such to be admitted into church membership, applicants shall make a profession of faith. No one should be compelled to join a church or have a forced testimony. Instead, Baptists believe that the local church is to be comprised of members who hold a “professed” faith in Christ alone for their salvation in accordance with Romans 10:9-10.

Prospective members ought to also subscribe to unity of doctrine as outlined in the Statement of Faith. The Elders are to spend time with each prospective member and when they determine a person has professed their faith and subscribes to unity of faith they ought to be presented to the members and must be accepted by a majority vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Simply asking people to come forward for membership at the end of a worship service is not a good practice and should be avoided for several reasons that include;

A rush to make a judgment that needs to be investigated.

Many believe they are a Christian but are instead false converts.

This call to come forward detracts from time devoted to the worship of God.

Some candidates will not be ready to become members because the Elders have determined after spending time with the candidate that they are not yet Christians or are a false convert, or they do not subscribe to unity in the faith as outlined in our Statement of Faith. In any case, the Elders are to take time in assisting the candidate in either coming to faith, or in being unified in faith. If that occurs the Elders should then consider that candidate as approved for membership into the body of Christ.

New members are admitted to the congregation after examination by the elders and a subsequent member vote during quarterly member meeting or during a special member meeting.

Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church. This is the normative operating life flow of the church who depends upon the presence of Christ, and in the faithfulness of its members who have Christ, to accomplish the work that the Lord has set before us. There are times when individual members or even an entire family struggles for any number of reasons, and in such a season the church body should support these ones in grace while not requiring service in a heavy handed manner. Does this church expect all able persons to serve? Yes, wholeheartedly.

Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members, but professed Christians may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its elders. Both Elders and deacons are appointed by the members of the congregation in accordance with Acts 6:3-5, and therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

The church congregation has a Christ-given authority to:

1. Affirm its new members, by member vote at members meetings.
2. Choose their own biblically qualified leaders (Acts 6:3-5, Acts 14:23).
3. Hold their leaders accountable to teach in accordance with God's word and should an elder become Biblically unqualified (1 Tim 3:1-7), remove such a person from office.
4. Hold members accountable, in accordance with the member covenant.
5. Exercise church discipline in a private manner when needed, and in accordance with Matt 18:15-20. Elevate church discipline only as need arises. The church congregation must see church discipline through at the lowest levels needed, but they also must be obedient to the point of excommunicating a brother or sister who will not repent in accordance with 1 Cor 5:4-5).

Section 4 – On Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church and/or rendering doubtful a profession of faith, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 1 Timothy 5: 19–20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4–5; Hebrews 12: 1–11; Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5; Matthew 7: 26–27; 18: 15–17; Luke 17: 3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5; Galatians 6: 1–5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14–15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1: 22);

For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–25);

For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);

For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28: 7; Matthew 5: 13–16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10); and

Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8, 17, 25; Romans 2: 24; 15: 5–6; II Corinthians 6: 14–7: 1; Ephesians 1:4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).

It is vital for the health and unity of the church and its members that church discipline is wielded for its preeminent purposes of correction, restoration, and unity of the body. It is vile thing to simply neglect discipline and instead seek divisive and unauthorized measures that subvert the church disciplinary processes. As a church body we should anticipate the need for discipline in its members and that it is our great God who disciplines those whom he loves (Hebrews 12:6). This congregation must bear with one another and strive for the unity of the faith in Christ.

A person who will not receive church discipline and will not be reconciled to this body of believers will sadly be terminated as a member of this church; otherwise known as excommunication.

Section 5 – Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership from this church congregation following his or her death, but we acknowledge as a congregation that the deceased in Christ are fully, and for all eternity members of the body of Christ and live on in glory.

It shall also recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her self-professed apostasy or as confirmed the Elders after examining and counseling with such a person.

Additionally, the church may recognize the termination of a person's membership after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline. Upon the unanimous vote of the elders of the church, the elders will present the case before the congregation and allow the member to be given an opportunity to come before the congregation. If the member will not repent, and or be reconciled to the church body and leadership, then with a majority vote of the members present, the member in question is to be excommunicated by the authority of the congregation given to it by Christ.

The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for sound biblical doctrine.

Article 4 - Meetings

Section 1 – Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2 – Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There shall be a regular members' meeting at least quarterly, at some time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership. The business of members' meetings must not occur during the worship service that exclusively has the worship of God Almighty in mind. Though business matters ultimately seek to glorify God, they are not matters of worship.

An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present.

A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Congregational approval shall proceed, without amendment, as a single vote on the budget in its entirety. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level.

At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of twenty percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting and posted at all entrances to the church during that time period. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

Only members over the age of 18 may vote at a member's meeting. We acknowledge that some children are members of the body of Christ but they may not vote due to them being under their family's household.

Article 5 – Officers

Section 1 – Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. Without exception, all Elders and Deacons must subscribe to a unity of faith in our Statement of Faith.

In addition, Gate II Church recognizes the need for administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 2 – Elders

The elders shall ordinarily be a plurality of elders made up of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1–6 and I Peter 5: 1–4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church, and set apart as elders.

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders in writing first, and then in testimonial of the facts, and if need be, to the congregation. However, if for some reason there is only one elder currently serving, the two members should first take their concern in writing to the head deacon. Any such action shall be done in accordance with Matthew 18:15–17 and I Timothy 5:17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members’ meeting of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. Further, the elders should seek to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, affirm our fundamental gospel convictions and do not teach our church anything contrary to the Statement of Faith.

Elders rule the congregation for the reason that they are accountable to Christ for the care of the souls in their charge (1 Tim 5:17, Heb 13:17). Their rule is over the spiritual affairs of the church and must be in accordance with the duties they are to carry out in the preceding paragraphs.

Elders are appointed by the congregation, and while they have much authority, that authority is limited by what is outlined in the Holy Scriptures.

In addition, all elders are members of the congregation, and therefore also vote on matters relating to the congregation. Elders are also subject to church discipline should the need arise.

The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of senior and associate pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons, and the membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a regular or specially-called budget meeting and called up for vote at the following members' meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings. For purposes of compliance with the non-profit corporation laws of the State of Georgia, the elders shall elect one of their number to serve as the president of the corporation and all elders shall serve as board members of the corporation.

Section 3 – The Senior Pastor

The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 3.

He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution.

The senior pastor shall have primary responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

Section 4 – Associate Pastors

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate.

An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 4.

He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation.

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.

Section 5 – Assistant Pastors

The church may call additional pastors, from within the congregation only, whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of assistant.

An assistant pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 5.

He shall assist the senior pastor and associate pastor(s) in the performance of their regular duties, and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor. The elders shall define the responsibilities of the assistant pastor(s).

Section 6 – Deacons

The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8–13. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6, these members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons.

Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration. The church needs deacons to provide logistical and material support so that the elders can focus on the Word of God and prayer. Beyond what we can glean from the differences in qualifications between elders and deacons, the Bible does not clearly indicate the function of deacons. Yet based on the pattern established in Acts 6 with the apostles and the Seven, it seems best to view deacons as servants who do whatever is necessary to allow the elders to accomplish their God-given calling of shepherding and teaching the church.

Specific areas deacons serve in the church body include:

Facilities: The deacons are responsible for managing the church property upkeep. This would include making sure the place of worship is prepared for the worship service, cleaning up, or running the sound system.

Benevolence: Similar to what took place in Acts 6:1–6 with the daily distribution to the widows, the deacons are involved in administering funds or other assistance to the needy.

Finances: While the elders should probably oversee the financial business of the church (Acts 11:30), deacons are to handle the day-to-day matters. This would include collecting and counting the offering, keeping records, and so on. These duties are not the same as those that are charged to the Treasurer of the church.

Ushers: The deacons ensure distributing bulletins, seating the congregation, or preparing the elements for communion.

Logistics: Deacons should be available to help in variety of ways so that the elders are able to concentrate on teaching and shepherding the church.

Section 7 – Clerk

It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the elders or the church.

The clerk, who shall be a member in good standing, shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of three years.

In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.

For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the state of Georgia, the clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

Section 8– Treasurer

The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, deacon, or paid church staff member, shall be a member in good standing. The treasurer shall support the elders in providing oversight of the financial and accounting activities of the church, shall not have custody of church funds, and shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. This responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also see that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to ensure that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders, whenever they may require it, an account of all activities as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of three years.

Article 6 – Elections

Section 1 – Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;

Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;

All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and

honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;
The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2 – Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, or treasurer shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator. Because this church is a new church plant the elders and deacons, clerk and treasurer will all be nominated and voted on in a meeting that will also ratify this constitution. After this initial installment of officers all future considerations will follow the pattern for election as outlined in this document.

The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a two-thirds majority of all votes cast for the office of elder at a regularly-scheduled members meeting. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

Section 3 – Calling of the Senior Pastor

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential senior pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as senior pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Section 4 – Calling of Associate Pastor

In the calling of any man to the position of associate pastor, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and

Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Section 5 – Calling of Assistant Pastor

The calling of any man to the position of assistant pastor requires that that man have been recognized and called by the congregation to the office of elder, according to the process described in Article 6, Section 2. Such a man may then be called by the elders to serve as assistant pastor with defined duties for a fixed period of time specified by the elders in the terms of his call.

Article 7 – Employment and Volunteers

Prospective employees must adhere to the Constitution and Bylaws, Statement of Faith, and the member Covenant of Gate II Church. The Elders will determine suitability of each any prospective employee and that the Elders have instituted these requirements for the purpose of ecclesiastical government. The elders may at their discretion consult with or form exploratory committees to aid in vetting prospective employees.

Internship candidates must adhere to the same except they are not required to accept the covenant as they will return to their home church when their internship is completed. Should an intern stay and desire to become a member, then the Covenant rules apply. Volunteers who are members must agree to as well to all of these documents.

Volunteers who are not yet members must agree to abide by the guidelines of our church documents and not teach contrary to them. In addition, any person who volunteers at this church in any capacity and is not a member should progress towards the goal of membership and being in covenant with the membership. If membership is not the goal of the volunteer, then that volunteer should be removed from service and asked to join a local church where they can fellowship.

Article 8 – Indemnification

Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

Section 3 – Procedure

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

Article 9 – Dispute Resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18: 15–20, I Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve ordinary civil disputes among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. In the case of criminal activity within the congregation, the State has a God-given responsibility to protect the peace and security of its citizens that should be supported and encouraged. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

Article 10 – Deviations of Practice

If a church member believes the church to be out of accord with this constitution, he or she should inform an elder. When the elders determine that the church is out of accord with this constitution, they must provide an update at each members' meeting until the situation is remedied.

Article 11 – Amendments

The Statement of Faith and Church Covenant may be amended if the elders unanimously approve the amendments and then present the amendment(s) to the congregation for a vote. The amendment(s) will be adopted upon a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment(s) shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

This constitution may be amended if the elders unanimously approved the amendment(s) and then present the amendment(s) to the congregation for a vote. The amendment(s) will be adopted provided a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting,

provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the church clerk.

Article 12 – Dissolution

In the event that the elders of the church determine that there is reasonable cause to dissolve Gate II Church as a corporate entity, the elders shall recommend dissolution to the membership. The elders shall call a special members' meeting as set out in Article 4, Section 2. Notice of the meeting shall be sent in writing to the membership and posted at all entrances to the church building no less than sixty days prior to the meeting. The notice shall state that the purpose of the meeting is to consider dissolution of the corporation and how the assets of the corporation will be distributed after all creditors have been paid. At least two-thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in the affirmative to approve the proposal of dissolution. After approval of dissolution by the members, all of the corporation's debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated, as approved by a simple majority of the members present at a members' meeting, to one or more religious organizations which meet the qualifications described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Faith. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of exclusively for such exempt purposes by a court of competent jurisdiction where the principal office of the corporation is then located.

Appendix A: Mission Statement

Gate II Church is called to make disciples of Jesus Christ by loving both the lost and our brothers and sisters in Christ, and by encouraging, equipping, and sending those disciples to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere we go.

Specifically Gate II Church is to be;

Loving: Loving God and loving the people created in His image in accordance with the Holy Scriptures.

Encouraging: Encouraging one another in good works and Godly obedience according to the Holy Scriptures.

Equipping: Equipping the saints for the work of ministry and building up the body of Christ according to the Holy Scriptures.

Sending: Sending God's people to fulfill the Great Commission according to the Holy Scriptures.

CALLING - We are called, by Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit, to challenge all people to be fully devoted followers of Christ. Our calling includes both introduction to and encouragement to remain in a life of full devotion to Jesus Christ. (Colossians 3:17) We are charged with encouraging, equipping, serving and sustaining Christians.

We do this by directly instilling our Christian philosophies, values, missions and goals in church members.^[1] Liturgical religious activities (e.g. preaching, worship services, Bible instruction, communion, baptism), as well as non-liturgical religious activities (e.g. mentorship, service opportunities, events, community involvement) all serve as methods that Gate II Church utilizes to instill our religious values and beliefs, both expressly and by example.^[2] Guided by Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit, non-liturgical ministries are grounded in our organizational policies, governing documents, handbooks, or procedures, including employment policies, Standards of Morals and Conduct, discipline, Statements of Faith, religious beliefs, Purpose Statement, Mission Statement, polity, and internal dispute resolution policy, of **Gate II Church** are therefore subject to all of its ministerial, membership, discipline, and excision policies.

COMMUNITY - We believe that our religious activity and religious worship derives meaning in large measure from participation in a larger religious community. For this reason, individual members of our body play a large role in furthering our mission and viewpoint as a church. ^[3] We exist to foster a Christ-like environment of persons subscribing to our religious beliefs and faith. ^[4] **Gate II Church** is dedicated to serving and providing for its community, not simply engaging in organized worship.^[5] (Galatians 6:10)

Associating with like-minded Christians reinforces **Gate II Church**'s Christian purpose and is vital to our faith's perpetuation.^[6] (2 Corinthians 6:14; 2 John 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:33) We are committed to being and making disciples who understand what it means to follow Jesus

Christ into a life of worship, fellowship, sacrifice, service and being led by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; John 15:16; Mark 16:15) Therefore, we are also called to enable and equip the uncommitted and opposed to be fully devoted followers of Christ. (Colossians 4:5-6; Psalm 96:3) Our mission as the body of Christ is to participate, share, and encourage each other toward spiritual growth. (1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:23-25; Colossians 3:16) Membership in our church requires a tangible commitment to our beliefs, purposes, and mission as outlined in **Gate II Church** Membership Policies, teachings, doctrines, Bylaws, Constitution, Articles of Incorporation, Purpose Statement, Facility Use Policy and Statements of Faith of **Gate II Church** – and are therefore subject to all of its ministerial, membership, discipline, and excision policies, which are incorporated herein by reference, as if fully set forth herein.

EXPRESSION OF FAITH - Gate II Church intends to transmit our system of religious beliefs, tradition, Christian morals, reverence, and values. [7] We do so by engaging in the community and individuals' lives, acts of worship, and through all activities in which we participate.[8] Likewise, we believe that all behavior of members and representatives of the church is communicative in nature, exemplifying and expressing our faith, both publicly and privately.[9] (1 Peter 2:12) Any member or representative who propounds a point of view contrary to our beliefs as stated in our Purpose Statement, Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, Code of Conduct, and Statements of Faith, which are incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth herein, will impair **Gate II Church's** integrity and ability to disseminate its religious views and message.[10] (James 4:4; 1 Corinthians 5:11-12)

OUTREACH OF MINISTRIES - We take very seriously the Church's charge to be a Christian presence in a secular world.[11] (Matthew 5:14- 16) Therefore, all activities that **Gate II Church** engages in are intended to further its religious purpose, as stated in our Purpose Statement. As such, all of our ministries are considered an outgrowth of the mission of **Gate II Church** to preach, teach, evangelize and instill the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.[12]

[1] See *Circle Sch. v. Pappert*, 381 F.3d 172, 182 (3d Cir. 2004).

[2] See *Boy Scouts of Am. v. Dale*, 530 U.S. 640, 655-656 (2000).

[3] See *Corporation of Presiding Bishop of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. Amos*, 483 U.S. 327, 342 (1987) (Brennan, J., concurring in judgment); *Roberts v. United States Jaycees*, 468 U.S. 609, 622 (1984).

[4] See *Boy Scouts of Am.*, 530 U.S. at 654.

[5] See *Amos*, 483 U.S. at 344 (Brennan, J., concurring).

[6] See *HEB Ministries, Inc. v. Tex. Higher Educ. Coordinating Bd.*, 235 S.W.3d 627, 659-660, (Tex. 2007).

[7] See *Boy Scouts of Am.*, 530 U.S. at 655-56 (quoting *Roberts*, 468 U.S. at 636).

[8] See *Boy Scouts of Am.*, 530 U.S. at 655-56.

[9] See *id.* at 648; *Spencer v. World Vision, Inc.*, 633 F.3d 723, 734 (9th Cir. 2011); *Univ. of Great Falls v. NLRB*, 278 F.3d 1335, 1343 (D.C. Cir. 2002); *Universidad Cent. de Bayamon v. NLRB*, 793 F.2d 383, 399-400 (1st Cir. 1985).

^[10] See *Boy Scouts of Am.*, 530 U.S. at 643 (quoting *Hurley v. Irish- American Gay*, 515 U.S. 557, 576-577 (1995)).

^[11] See *Little v. Wuerl*, 929 F.2d 944, 945-46 (3d Cir. 1991).

^[12] See *Hall v. Baptist Mem'l Health Care Corp.*, 215 F.3d 618, 622 (6th Cir. 2000); *Cline v. Catholic Diocese*, 206 F.3d 651, 655-56 (6th Cir. 1999).

Appendix B: Facility Use Policy and Religious Activity

All Gate II Church property and facilities (including furniture, fixtures, and equipment) are holy and set apart to worship God, regardless of the location of the facility. (Colossians 3:17) Gate II Church facilities are consecrated to our religious ministry and mission because they are a provision from God. Use of Gate II Church property shall be for the propagation of the Christian faith, for fellowship, witnessing, religious teaching, and charity. Therefore, all use and occupancy of Gate II Church property shall be limited to persons of our particular religion, the propagation of religion, or related religious purposes.

All activities on church property must cohere with the religious purpose of Gate II Church and further its Christian mission, whether the activity has an overt liturgical religious purpose (preaching, worship services, Bible instruction, communion, baptism) or a non-liturgical religious purpose (social service, mentorship, community service, benevolence, charity, schools). Gate II Church conducts all activities in order to advance or express its Christian mission, message and viewpoint. Church facility use shall be exclusively conditioned on whether the use promotes Gate II Church's mission, message and viewpoint, as all facility usage is an opportunity to glorify God. In addition, church property is exclusively reserved for persons and organizations who agree to abide by Gate II Church including any and all written organizational policies, governing documents, handbooks, or procedures, employment policies, Standards of Morals and Conduct, discipline, Statements of Faith, religious beliefs, Purpose Statement, Mission Statement, polity, and internal dispute resolution policy, which are incorporated herein by reference, as if fully set forth herein. Likewise, Gate II Church facilities are not generally open to the public and may not be used by persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs that conflict with Gate II Church's faith or moral teachings – including but not limited to Gate II Church's Written Statements of Faith, which are incorporated herein by reference, as if fully set forth herein.

Any facilities that are made available to approved non-members for usage are meant to further Gate II Church's calling to minister to others, in the vein of charity and witnessing to our faith. For this reason, Gate II Church property cannot be used for purposes that contradict the church's beliefs, which would constitute a grave violation of the church's faith and religious practice, as well as degrade Gate II Church's religious integrity. (2 Corinthians 6:3; and 14; 1 Thessalonians 5:22)

OWNERSHIP / CONTROL

Elders of Gate II Church possess the exclusive power to enforce conformity of belief. In regards to facility usage, Gate II Church seeks to avoid member confusion, formal or material cooperation with evil, and scandal by associating with any conduct that contradicts its religious beliefs. (1 Peter 2:12) Church property issues or disputes are directly related to religious doctrine and practice, as all facilities are utilized in a manner to advance or express Gate II Church's Christian mission, message, and viewpoint. (Colossians 3:17) In the event that church facility use departs in any way from Gate II Church's doctrine, mission, Written Statements of Faith, teaching or policies, Gate II Church's designated religious authority shall exclusively resolve any dis-

puts. The Elders of Gate II Church alone may make inquiry into the religious law and usage of Gate II Church facilities and is therefore essential to the resolution of the controversy.

FACILITY USAGE FEE RATE

Gate II Church is a not-for-profit corporation. Because the facility is exclusively utilized for religious and ministry purposes, it may be reserved for the below-market rate of \$75/hr. The fee is intended to be used for general maintenance and cleaning of church facilities.

GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

Each individual, group, or organization utilizing Gate II Church facilities (including equipment and property) is required to abide by all church guidelines, requirements and use restrictions at all times. Each individual, group, or organization is required to sign Gate II Church's Facilities Usage Agreement.

Gate II Church incorporates by reference its Code of Conduct, as if fully set forth herein.

Gate II Church incorporates its Statement of Faith on Marriage, Sexuality, and Gender Identity, as if fully set forth herein.

Use of any controlled substances, including alcohol, tobacco products, and marijuana, is strictly prohibited on church property.

Church facilities are to be used with care and left in good, clear condition.

Licensee(s) or Invitee(s) reserving Gate II Church facilities or property must confine said usage to pre-approved areas of the church property, as provided for in their Facility Usage Agreement.

Any events involving children and youth require adequate adult supervision, provided by the reserving licensee(s) or invitee(s).

Gate II Church reserves the right to coordinate and schedule alternative activities and events in other church facilities.

Gate II Church reserves the right to accept or deny any applicants who seek to utilize or reserve Gate II Church facilities. Permission that is granted to licensee(s) or invitee(s) to utilize Gate II Church facilities or property shall not be transferred or passed to any alternative individual, group, or organization without the permission of Gate II Church.

INSURANCE AND INDEMNITY

Non-member facility users will be required to provide their own general liability insurance coverage with a combined single limit of not less than \$100,000.00 naming Gate II Church as an additional insured. Any and all damage occurring to Gate II Church facilities as a result of

their use or reservation, shall be repaired and replaced by the licensee(s) or invitee(s), at a cost determined by Church Elders or their designee.

All who reserve Gate II Church property or facilities for use agree to release, protect, defend, indemnify and hold harmless Gate II Church and its trustees, officers, employees, members and other representatives from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses, damages, actions, costs and expenses (including, without limitation, reasonable attorney's fees and other legal costs) directly or indirectly arising out of their use of any Gate II Church facilities.

APPLICATION

All of our members, employees, and volunteers must affirm and adhere to this Facility Use Policy and church policies referenced therein to qualify for involvement with the ministry. This is necessary to accomplish our religious mission, goals and purpose. Any non-members who wish to utilize Gate II Church's facilities must acknowledge receipt and review of this Facility Use Policy. Further, non-members must agree to conduct themselves and their event, as well as utilize church facilities, in a manner consistent with Gate II Church's purpose, ministry, Written Statements of Faith and policies, as set forth herein.

FACILITY USAGE AGREEMENT

Name of Licensee(s) or Invitee(s): _____ Address: _____
_____ Telephone Number(s): _____
_____ Contact Person: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Website: _____

Licensee(s) or Invitee(s) Membership Status: _____

Description of Licensee(s) or Invitee(s) Ministry: _____ Date(s) and time(s) of event: _____
_____ Purpose of event: _____ Nature of event: _____
_____ Facility/Room being reserved: _____
_____ Facility Usage Fee: _____

I have received, reviewed and agree to adhere to all Gate II Church's policies, including but not limited to the Statement of Faith on Marriage, Sexuality, and Gender Identity, Bylaws, Standards of Morals and Conduct, and Statement of Religious Authority. I have read and fully understand the Facility Use Policy and the Facility Use Agreement and hereby expressly agree to adhere to all guidelines, requirements, restrictions and other provisions set forth therein.

I request to use the church facilities for the express purpose indicated above, and will utilize said facilities in a manner consistent with these stated purposes. To the best of my knowledge, I am

not aware that the reserving individual, group, or organization holds, advances, or advocates beliefs that conflict with the church's faith or moral teachings.

It is agreed and understood that this contract shall remain in force only for the term in which I comply with Gate II Church policies, as set forth herein, and as long thereafter as I comply. I understand that all facilities privileges automatically terminate if I engage in any conduct or avocation of conduct that stands in contradiction to Gate II Church's stated beliefs, policies, and mission as set forth herein. I agree to notify Gate II Church authority immediately upon the knowledge that church facilities or properties are being utilized in a manner inconsistent with church policies. I submit to the designated authority of Gate II Church to resolve any disputes relating to church property or facility use.

_____ Invitee(s)/Licensee Signature(s)

_____ Title

_____ Date

Approved by Gate II Church:

_____ Signature(s)

_____ Title

_____ Date

Appendix C: Statement of Faith

The Elders of Gate Two Church affirm both the inerrancy and sufficiency of the Holy Bible that is the Word of God. We affirm the Five Solas of the Reformation and the historic Christian Creeds including the Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed and Chalcedonian Creed. We consider these invaluable for equipping the saints and teaching the Essential Doctrines of the Christian Faith as revealed in Holy Scriptures that are our only standard and authority, and rule of faith. The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith.

1689 Baptist Confession of Faith

Gate II Church subscribes to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. For brevity a weblink link to that document in modern English is provided here: <https://founders.org/library/1689-confession/>. At times, when necessary, the Elders will provide articles on specific issues as needed for clearer or deeper study. These 'articles' or "Elder's Statement of Faith" are regulated by Scripture as illustrated by the 1689 Confession. It is the Word of God alone that governs the church, her worship, polity and all things therein and as such, the doctrines of God and His redemptive narrative. Therefore, the essence of all that scripture teaches as essential is found in our confession as expressly and certainly clarified as to avoid indifference or confusion about matters of the Christian faith.

Our distinctiveness are found in our foundational beliefs that were revived during the time of the Reformation. As such, we hold the five pillars of the reformation and build our theology, focus on scripture and preaching from this perspective.

The Five Solas of the Reformation

Scripture Alone

That Scripture alone (the 39 books of the OT and the 27 books of the NT) is the sole rule and standard for faith and practice before God. (Luke 16:29, 31; 24:27, 44; 2 Tim. 3:15-16; John 5:46-47)

Grace Alone

That by God's good pleasure alone, some men are saved to the praise of Christ's glorious grace; others are left in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice. (1 Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:34; Eph. 1:5-6; Rom. 9:22-23; Jude 1:4)

Faith Alone

That grace of faith where people are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily worked by the ministry of the preached Word. (2 Cor. 4:13; Eph. 2:8; Rom. 10:14, 17; Luke 17:5; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:32)

Christ Alone

That Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. (Isa. 42:1; 1 Peter 1:19-20; Acts 3:22; Heb. 5:5-6; Psa. 2:6; Luke 1:33; Eph. 1:22-23; Heb. 1:2; Acts 17:31; Isa. 53:10; John 17:6; Rom. 8:30)

Glory of God Alone

Knowing that man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever, all holy duties Christians accomplish are exercised for God's glory, by which He may pursue His own glory in us to the uttermost. (Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 10:31; Psa. 73:24-28)

Marriage and Human Sexuality

Preamble

We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our infallible guide. (2 Timothy 3:16–17) Since the Holy Bible does speak to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that we correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches on these matters.

We are committed to the home and family as set forth in Holy Scripture. We believe God has ordained and created marriage to exist between one man and one woman, with absolute marital fidelity. The Bible sets forth specific home and family values, which include the distinct roles of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and children. It is our firm conviction that we uphold the dignity of each individual as we embrace the unchanging and longstanding principles of scriptural truth.

Religious Beliefs

Based on Holy Scripture and the constant moral teaching of the universal Church, we believe:

Marriage — **Gate II Church** defines marriage as the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of one man and one woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. (Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 19:4-9, Mark 10:5-9, Ephesians 5:31-33)

Sexual Immorality — **Gate II Church** believes that sexual acts outside marriage are prohibited as sinful. Consequently, **Gate II Church** members must resist and refrain from any and all sexual acts outside marriage — including but not limited to adultery, fornication, incest, zoophilia, pornography, prostitution, masturbation, voyeurism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, sodomy, polygamy, polyamory, sologamy, or same-sex sexual acts. (Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 18:7-23, Leviticus 20:10-21, Deuteronomy 5:18, Matthew 15:19, Matthew 5:27-28, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-13, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 4:17-19, Colossians 3:5)

Sexual Identity — **Gate II Church** believes that God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. Consequently, **Gate II Church** members must affirm their biological sex and refrain from any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex — including but not limited to elective sex-reassignment, transvestite, transgender, or non-binary “genderqueer” acts or conduct. (Genesis 1:26-28, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Sexual Orientation — **Gate II Church** believes that God created and ordered human sexuality to the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of man and woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. Consequently, **Gate II Church** members must affirm the sexual complementarity of man and woman and resist any and all same-sex sexual attractions and refrain from any and all same-sex sexual acts or conduct, which are intrinsically disordered. (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 10:5-9, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 5:25-27, Revelation 19:7-9, Revelation 21:2)

Sexual Redemption — **Gate II Church** believes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and should seek redemption through confession, repentance, baptism, and faith in Jesus Christ. Consequently, **Gate II Church** members must welcome and treat with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who experience same-sex attractions or confess sexually immoral acts but are committed to resisting sexual temptation, refraining from sexual immorality, and conforming their behavior to **Gate II Church** Statement of Faith. (Matthew 11:28-30, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-10, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:17-18, Hebrews 4:14-16)

Celibacy — **Gate II Church** believes that Holy Scripture grants two life-enhancing options for human sexual behavior: (1) the conjugal “one flesh” marital union of one man and one woman, and (2) celibacy. Either is a gift from God, given as He wills for His glory and the good of those who receive and rejoice in His gift to them. Celibacy and faithful singleness is to be celebrated and affirmed within **Gate II Church**. (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18, 21-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-8; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 7:1-8; Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Romans 12:10; 1 Timothy 5:1-2)

Holy Scripture:

Marriage and Human Sexuality

Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:18-24; Genesis 19:5-10; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:7-23; Leviticus 20:10-21; Deuteronomy 5:18; Judges 19:22-24; Matthew 5:27-28; Matthew 15:19; Matthew 19:4-9; Mark 10:5-9; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-13; 1 Corinthians 5:11; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:17-19; Ephesians 5:25-27; Ephesians 5:31; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; Jude 1:7; Revelation 19:7-9; Revelation 21:2

Pastoral Care

Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 2:17-18; Hebrews 4:14-16

Application

All of our members, employees, and volunteers must affirm and adhere to this Doctrinal and Religious Absolute statement on marriage and human sexuality to qualify for involvement with the ministry. This is necessary to accomplish our religious mission, goals and purpose. Behavior or counter-witnessing that does otherwise will impede and burden our integrity and religious mission. We believe that God's grace can wipe the slate of guilt and sin, though the consequences are still incurred.

Authority

The Bible is the inspired, infallible, and fully sufficient Word of God, acting as the source of authority over morality, our beliefs, Christian lifestyle and conduct. Elders of this church are charged with the ministerial responsibility of Biblical interpretation and promulgating religious policy. Elders of this church will determine life application as well as final matters relating to church theology, philosophy, Christian practice, faith, divine truth, morality, and theological and doctrinal resolutions.

Abortion

Preamble

We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our inspired, infallible, inerrant, and sufficient guide. (2 Timothy 3:16–17) Because Holy Scripture speaks to creation and human life, it is imperative that we correctly understand, articulate, and abide by what Holy Scripture teaches on this matter.

We believe that God has created mankind in His image (Imago Dei) and that human life begins at fertilization. God, in his infinite sovereignty, uniquely formed human beings and gave them a special dignity, personal freedom, and individual accountability among all the works of creation. Human beings have been made for relationship with God and to be good and faithful stewards of creation. God created each person's inmost being, knitting each person together in his mother's womb. (Psalm 139:13) As God's individualized and personal creation, each person is fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14) God has ordained all the days of each person's life before he came to be. (Psalm 139:16)

Religious Beliefs

Based on Holy Scripture and the constant moral teaching of the universal Church, we believe:

From the moment of fertilization until natural death, every human life is sacred because every human life has been created by God, in His image and likeness.

From the moment of fertilization, every human life must be recognized, respected, and protected as having the rights of a person and the inviolable right to life.

The right to life and physical integrity of every unborn human life is inviolable—it is not a concession made by society or the state, but is instead inherent to the unborn human life by virtue of its creation in the image of God.

Because human life begins at the moment of fertilization, it is against our religious and moral conviction to formally or materially cooperate in the termination of unborn human life.

We are strongly committed to the preservation and defense of unborn human life, which compels our religious, moral, and ethical duty to defend unborn human life from destruction, whether by surgical abortion or use of drugs, devices, or services that have the intent, design, effect, or risk of terminating unborn human life or preventing its implantation and growth post-fertilization.

The Church and all her ministers and ministries should publicly witness to society and to the state regarding the intrinsic, inherent, and inviolable dignity of all human life, from fertilization to natural death.

Holy Scripture

In standing against abortion, this church incorporates by reference the following Holy Scriptures, which are cited in the statements, resolutions, commentaries, or doctrines of Christian denominations that are expressly and vocally opposed to abortion: Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod, Presbyterian Church in America, Roman Catholic Church, and Southern Baptist Convention.

Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 25:21-22; Exodus 20:13; Psalm 22:9-10; Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:1-2; Isaiah 49:5; Job 10:8-12; Jeremiah 1:4-5 Luke 1:39-45

Early Church Fathers' Statements on Sanctity of Human Life

“Thus, you read the word of God, spoken to Jeremiah: ‘Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee.’ If God forms us in the womb, He also breathes on us as He did in the beginning: ‘And God formed man and breathed into him the breath of life.’ Nor could God have known man in the womb unless he were a whole man. ‘And before thou camest forth from the womb, I sanctified thee.’ Was it, then, a dead body at that stage? Surely it was not, for “God is the God of the living and not the dead.”

—*Tertullian, De Anima*

“It is not permissible for us to destroy the seed by means of illicit manslaughter once it has been conceived in the womb, so long as blood remains in the person.”

—*Tertullian, Apologia*

“Why sow where the ground makes it its care to destroy the fruit? Where there are many efforts at abortion? Where there is murder before the birth.... Why then dost thou abuse the gift of God, and fight with His laws, and follow after what is a curse as if a blessing, and make the

chamber of procreation a chamber for murder, and arm the woman that was given for childbearing unto slaughter?”

—*John Chrysostom, Homily 24*

“[T]his lustful cruelty, or if you please, cruel lust, resorts to such extravagant methods as to use poisonous drugs to secure barrenness; or else, if unsuccessful in this, to destroy the conceived seed by some means previous to birth, preferring that its offspring should rather perish than receive vitality; or if it was advancing to life within the womb, should be slain before it was born.”

—*Augustine, De Nube et Concupiscentia*

“Therefore brothers, you see how perverse they are and hastening wickedness, who are immature, they seek abortion of the conception before the birth; they are those who tell us, ‘I do not see that which you say must be believed.’”

—*Augustine, Sermon 126*

“Thou shalt not slay the child by procuring abortion; nor, again, shalt thou destroy it after it is born.”

—*Barnabas, Letter*

Appendix D: Member Covenant

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, having been brought to repentance of our sins, we are called to give up ourselves to him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

We agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith. Should we find any disagreement with any part of the statement of faith we will seek the counsel of our elder(s) and will not openly teach against or disparage in any way the Gate II Church Statement of faith.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We will rejoice at each others' happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, and by God's grace and power we will deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new life in Christ where we present our entire being daily unto the Lord. Given such a great salvation in Christ, this is our great joy and duty to submit to Christ acknowledging that it is God who calls us to submission and it is God who transforms our very being to be conformed to His Son's image.

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.