

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS (Revised 2018)

Article 1: Name, Affiliation and Mission

Section 1: Name

The name of the Corporation is Geist Community Church. This corporation will be further referred in the bylaws as the "Church." The church maintains its principal office at 6697 W. 900 N., McCordsville, IN 46055.

Section 2: Affiliation

The Church will have full power and authority to associate with organizations in keeping with the character and purposes of the Church as set forth in its Constitution and By laws. The Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control.

Section 3: Mission Statement

We glorify God by making disciples of all nations.

We do this by:

Worship – Both individual and corporate worship of the Triune God is the natural and necessary response of every person who has been redeemed through the grace and mercy made known in Christ. Worship of the church must be motivated and shaped by the character of God, who alone is worthy, as we strive to obey His commands, proclaim His glory, and promote His kingdom. God-honoring worship is characterized by sound doctrine; expository preaching; prayerful dependence; gospel-centered ministry; God-centered, Christ-exalting singing; generous, sacrificial giving; baptism/communion; and Spirit-filled living.

Community – Those who have been redeemed by God are compelled and empowered through the Holy Spirit to participate in the diverse community of the church through the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Forgiveness, encouragement, exhortation, hospitality, and other expressions of love within the church ought to declare to the world the truth of Jesus. Biblical community is characterized by covenant membership, biblical unity, mutual accountability, restorative discipline, and biblical leadership.

Service – Those who have been redeemed by God to do good works serve as ambassadors of Christ by promoting the glory of God and proclaiming the manifold wisdom of God. Thus, the redeemed ought to sacrificially and generously give of their time, talents, and treasure entrusted to their care by making disciples and modeling Christ-like compassion. Christian service is characterized by multiplying disciples; redemptive relationships; local and global outreach; and compassion and justice.

Article 2: Membership Covenant

Preamble

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the public confession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully endeavor to keep the spirit of this covenant as one body in Christ.

The Church

We resolve, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to:

- walk together in Christian love;

- strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and love;
- promote its fruitfulness and spirituality;
- attend its services regularly;
- sustain its worship, ordinances, and doctrines;
- submit to its discipline and the authority of its leadership;
- give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin;
- give faithfully of time and talent in its activities;
- contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, to the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

We moreover resolve that when we leave this church we will as soon as possible unite with another church of like faith where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Daily Living

We also resolve to:

- maintain family and private devotion to the Lord;
- train our children according to the Word of God;
- seek the salvation of our family and friends;
- walk carefully in the world;
- be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct;
- abstain from all activities, habits, and lifestyles that dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ, cause stumbling to a fellow believer, or hinder the gospel witness;
- be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, our Savior,
- and give Him preeminence in all things.

One Another

We further resolve to:

- encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return;
- watch over one another in brotherly love;
- remember each other in prayer;
- aid each other in sickness and distress;
- cultivate Christian sympathy in feelings and courtesy in speech;
- work for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;
- be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation.

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.

Article 3: Statement of Faith

We believe:

The Bible - The 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired by God and without error in the original writings, embracing all matters which the Biblical writers address, and believe the Bible is the supreme and final authority in faith and life. 2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

God – There is one God-eternal, Creator, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, existing eternally as three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and one in nature, attributes, power, and glory. Genesis 1:1,26; Proverbs 30:4; Mark 12:29; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 1:1-4, 14,18; Acts 5:3,4.

God the Father - The Father is the executive head residing at the throne of Heaven. He is working all events of the universe, past present and future to the fulfillment of His plans and purposes. Romans 8:28.

God the Son - The Lord Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and that He is both fully God and fully man. Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35; Philippians 2:6-11; Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14.

God the Holy Spirit - The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, equal with God the Father and God the Son; that He was active in creation; that He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment; that He is the Agent in the new birth; that He baptizes all believers into the body of Christ at conversion; that He indwells, seals, endows, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer. Psalm 139:7-12; John 14:16,17; 16:13,14; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19.

Humanity – Mankind was created perfect in the image of God, but the first man and woman sinned intentionally which resulted not only in physical death but also spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God. All are born with a sinful nature, and are sinners in thought, word, and deed. Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 1:18,32; 3:10-19; 5:12,19.

Salvation - The Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as a representative, substitutionary sacrifice and rose again for our justification; that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood and are saved by grace through faith wholly apart from human works. Acts 13:39; 16:31; Romans 3:21-28; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:3-8.

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus are born again by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and thereby become the children of God forever and are eternally secure. John 1:12,13; 3:3-16; 5:24; 10:28,29; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:4-11.

The Christian Life - Christians should live for the glory of God and the well being of their neighbors. Their conduct should be above reproach and blameless before the world. They should be a faithful steward of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:31; Galatians 6:10; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 4:2, Ephesians 4:14-16.

The Church - The local Church is an organized congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant, observing the ordinances of Christ, having the offices of elders and deacons, exercising the gifts, rights, privileges, and responsibilities given them by His Word. We believe that the Church which is His Body includes all New Testament believers. Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 7:17; 11:16; 1 Timothy 3:1-15; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 1:22,23; 2:14,15; 5:23-32.

We believe that the Scriptural ordinances of the local church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper; that Baptism, by immersion, should be administered to believers only, as an identifying symbol of their belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and our death to sin and resurrection to a new walk in life ; that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's death and His atonement for our sins. Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 8:36-39; 18:8; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32.

Our Hope – Our ultimate hope is the glorious return of our great God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus will physically return to earth as Judge and King to reign from the throne of David. 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Isaiah 9:7.

We believe in the physical resurrection of every person who has ever lived. All believers, whose names are found in the Lamb's Book of Life, will live forever with God in their perfected bodies in the new heaven and new earth. All unbelievers of all ages, whose names are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life, will be judged at

the great white throne, cast into the lake of fire, and eternally separated from God. Daniel 12; 1 Corinthians 15:12-28; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 Revelation 20-22.

Marriage and Family – God’s design for marriage is a lifetime covenant between one man and one woman. The God-given responsibility of parents is to lovingly train their children in the instruction and knowledge of the Lord. Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-9; Ephesians 5:18-32, 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 12.

Article 4: Membership

Section 1: General

The New Testament presents a picture of definable groups of people who, once committed to the Lord, identified themselves with and committed themselves to a particular local body. Acts 2:42-46; Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1; Acts 11:26.

Membership is open to any person who has personally accepted Christ as Savior and Lord, who has been baptized as a believer, and who desires to be committed to the Church as a local body of believers. Membership of the church will consist of all persons who have met the qualifications for membership and who are listed on the membership roll.

Section 2: Qualifications for Membership

1. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation
2. Baptism by immersion as a testimony of salvation
3. Completion of the Church's membership class materials
4. The Church elders’ recommendation for membership to the members after an interview with a Church elder or pastor
5. A commitment to abide by the Membership Covenant, and affirmation of the Church’s Statement of Faith
6. Affirmed as a member by the membership during a member meeting
7. At least 18 years of age

Section 3: Designation of Membership

In an effort to properly reflect the membership of the church, membership rolls will be maintained. These rolls will be updated periodically.

1. **Members:** All members who are currently abiding by the Church Membership Covenant.
2. **Non-Attending Members:** Those unable to regularly gather with the church may retain their membership to GCC under special circumstances as determined by the elders (military service, missionary work, severe health problems, etc.) but are expected to actively participate in a local like-minded church, wherever possible. Non-attending members are not eligible to hold an office within the church. Non-attending membership ends when a member is able to regularly gather with Geist Community Church or when a member permanently moves to another location and covenants as a member of another church.

Section 4: Expectations of Members

Members of Geist Community Church will abide by our Constitution.

Section 5: Rights of Membership

Every member will have the right to affirm the following matters:

1. The annual budget of the church
2. Affirmation of Elders
3. Affirmation of Deacons
4. Affirmation of Missionaries
5. Affirmation and removal of Members
6. The acquisition of land
7. The merger or dissolution of the church
8. Expenses not previously authorized that exceed 5% of the annual budget
9. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Church
10. The calling or removing of the senior pastor

Section 6: Termination of Membership

Members will be removed from the Church membership for any of the following reasons:

1. Death
2. Joining with another gospel-believing church
3. Disciplinary removal by the Church members for reasons including failure to adhere to the membership covenant or statement of faith

Section 7: Restorative Church Discipline

Major, outward, unrepentant sin in the life of believers obstructs their walk with the Lord, threatens the unity and fellowship within the Church, and ultimately weakens the witness of the Church. Scripture encourages believers to be concerned with each other's spiritual wellbeing and teaches them to confront in love where there is evidence of major, outward, and unrepentant sin. The Church acknowledges the following biblical procedures and principles for church discipline, with the goal to restore members in their walk with the Lord: Luke 17:3; 2 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Corinthians 11:29; Galatians 6:1; 1 John 1:7:

1. If a member has knowledge of major, outward, unrepentant sin in the life of a fellow member, he or she should go promptly and confront the individual in private (Matthew 18:15).
2. If there is no expression of repentance, the individual should confront the fellow believer in the presence of one or two others (preferably including an elder or pastor), so that “every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses” (Matthew 18:16).
3. If there is still no repentance, the matter should be brought before the members of the Church (Matthew 18:17 and 1 Corinthians 5:4–5). The elders should generally be involved before step three, and they should generally be the ones who make the recommendation to move to step four, while recognizing that the members have the biblical authority to remove the individual from Church membership.
4. If there is still no evidence of repentance, Scripture teaches that the unrepentant individual should be removed from the Church membership and that Church members should break fellowship with the person, until such time as there is genuine repentance (1 Corinthians 5:4–5, 11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; Titus 3:10-11).

Scripture indicates that believers are responsible for going promptly to the person they have been offended by or when they have done something offensive to another person. Confronting each other should be carried out with an attitude of love, concern, and humility, and should be motivated by the sincere desire to see repentance and restoration of fellowship. Reflecting Christ's grace and forgiveness, believers are taught to forgive and to

seek restoration to fellowship. Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 18:31-35; Luke 17:3; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 5:23-24; Ephesians 4:26-27.

Article 5: Meetings of Members

Section 1: General

Member meetings will be held regularly as determined by the Church elders. The annual budget will be adopted each year in one of these meetings. All decisions in the member meetings will be made by the affirmation vote of three-fourths of those voting, unless otherwise specified in this constitution.

Section 2: Notice Requirements for Meetings

Notice concerning meetings will be given prior to a meeting. The agenda at any meeting can only be determined by the elders.

Section 3: Quorum

Members voting at a meeting duly noticed will constitute a quorum of the membership for the transaction of business.

Article 6: Church Leadership

Section 1: General

The leadership structure of the Church is based upon the nature of the Church as revealed in Scripture, as well as the necessary legal requirements for a recognized religious organization. The leadership structure of the Church is intentionally designed to accommodate simplicity, growth, unity, and biblical teaching. The Church is guided by the pastoral staff, protected by the elders, served by the deacons and engaged by the membership, all under the authority of Christ the Head (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Peter 5:1-3).

Section 2: Staff

Senior Pastor: The senior pastor has ultimate responsibility for the vision of the church body and the shepherding of its members (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-32). The senior pastor is to be considered the President of the organization and is responsible for providing spiritual instruction and leadership to the members, staff and ministry leaders of the church. The senior pastor is a permanent member of the elders. The senior pastor will team with other pastoral/ministerial staff and together serve as the administrators of the Church, equipping God's people and overseeing the ministries of the Church (Exodus 18:17-18; John 21:16-17; Acts 20:17,28; Ephesians 4:11-12; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Peter 5:1-2).

The requirements for this position are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9. The senior pastor, once called to the office, must become a member of the church.

The senior pastor will serve until his service is ended by resignation or terminated by the affirmative vote of those present and voting at a special meeting of the church called for such purpose. When a vacancy in the role of senior pastor occurs, the elders will form a search team to select the senior pastor.

Pastoral/Ministerial Staff: Other pastoral/ministerial staff positions may be established by the elders when positions are determined to be necessary. Such positions and duties may be discontinued or changed at the discretion of the elders. The senior pastor or appropriate staff member will supervise the pastoral/ministerial staff positions. Pastoral/ministerial staff will become members of the church once hired. Pastoral/ministerial staff may be terminated by the elders, or by voluntarily resigning.

Support Staff: Support staff will be hired as the elders determine. Such staff will be responsible to their immediate supervisor or designated staff person. Support staff may be terminated by the elders, or by voluntarily resigning.

Section 3: Elders

General: Elders are the conscience and guardians of the Church. They function as overseers for the Church (1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 20:28). Based on God's will for Geist Community Church, the elders evaluate everything taking place in the Church according to the following criteria:

1. The Church's Statement of Faith,
2. The Church's Mission,
3. The Church's Membership Covenant and
4. The Church's Resources.

Elders work with the staff to determine the programs of the Church.

Number and Term of Office: The number of elders will vary based on the needs of the Church and the availability of qualified men, but not less than 3. Each elder will hold office for a three-year term, open to reaffirmation. In the event that elders need to be added, notice will be given to the congregation. During this time members may present names of prospective elders to any current elder. All nominees shall be examined and considered by the then current elders. The elders will present their selection for affirmation to the members.

Qualifications:

1. An elder must be a male member of the Church as evidenced by servant leadership and ministry involvement.
2. An elder must whole-heartedly support the Constitution.
3. An elder must possess the biblical qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; and Acts 20:28.

Authority: There are four decisions the elders may not make without the members' approval

1. Elders may not appoint or remove a senior pastor
2. Elders may not sell real property
3. Elders may not change the Constitution and By-laws
4. Elders may not change the budget more than 5% of the annual budget.

Removal: Cause for dismissal will include disagreement with doctrinal statement, personal, or spiritual misconduct. Any elder may be removed from office by at least a three-fourths consensus of the voting elders, not including the senior pastor. The elder in question will cast no vote in such deliberations.

Meetings: The elders will conduct meetings on a regular basis. Meetings will be called as necessary and conducted according to scriptural principles. All decisions of the elders require a minimum three-fourths majority of the body of elders.

Section 4: Deacon/Deaconess

General: A deacon/deaconess is a faithful member who serves within a specific area of delegated responsibility assigned by the elders and affirmed by the members. Typical ministries assigned to deacons/deaconesses would include, but are not limited to, membership care, finances, missions, benevolence, hospitality, and facility maintenance. Deacons/deaconesses have three primary responsibilities:

1. To free up the elders of the church to devote themselves for the ministry of the word and for prayer (Acts 6:4)
2. To promote unity within the church by addressing practical issues that can cause division (Acts 6:1)
3. To meet practical and specific needs within the church (Acts 6:3)

Number and Term of Office: The total number of deacons/deaconesses will vary depending on the needs of the congregation and availability of qualified persons. Each deacon will hold office for a three-year term, open to reaffirmation. In the event that deacons/deaconesses need to be added, notice will be given to the congregation. During this time, members may present names of prospective individuals to any current elder. . All nominees will be examined and considered by the elders. The elders will present their selection for affirmation to the members.

Qualifications:

1. A deacon/deaconess must be a member of the Church
2. A deacon/deaconess must possess the biblical qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Authority: Deacons/Deaconess may recruit volunteers and establish teams to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

Removal: Cause for dismissal before the end of a three-year term will include resignation, removal from church membership, or failure to meet biblical qualifications. Dismissal will be affirmed by the elders.

Article 7: Finances and Reports

Section 1: Annual Budget

The Church will have an annual budget, voted on by the Church membership, to serve as the guide for the financial operation of the Church.

Section 2: Development of Annual Budget

The annual Church budget will be established through the following process:

- A. Financial requests are submitted to the elders for consideration and formation of a unified Church budget.
- B. The elders review and set compensation packages for Church staff.
- C. The elders approve the proposed budget, which is printed and made available to all members prior to the annual meeting.
- D. The budget is presented to the members at the annual meeting for their approval.

Section 3: Budget Management

Modifications within the budget can be made by the elders if circumstances in the life of the Church mandate such changes as detailed in Article 6, Section 3. The budget should, however, be the guide for the financial operation of the Church.

Section 4: Records and Reports

The Church will maintain the following records and reports:

- A. Adequate records of all financial transactions
- B. Contribution statements for contributors

Article 8: Amendments to the Bylaws

Any request for amendment of these by-laws must be in writing and should be submitted to the elders for study and consideration. The elders will issue a timely response to the proposed amendment, alteration or revision. The elders will decide whether to propose the amendment to the Church for adoption. If proposed to the Church, an amendment requires the affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members present at a meeting as detailed in Article 5.

Article 9: Tax Exempt Status, Dissolution and Liquidation

The purpose for which the Church has been organized is perpetual and it will operate as a tax-exempt organization under the United States Internal Revenue Service code. In the event of the dissolution of the Church, the assets will be liquidated and distributed by first paying all creditors. All remaining assets will then be distributed to another Christian organization(s), which has like faith, beliefs, and purposes as the Church and which qualify as a tax-exempt organization. These organizations will be recommended by the elders to the Church body for approval.

Revised October 21, 2018 following vote by members