

Sample Church Constitution

A starting point for congregational churches

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Church Name	[Legal Name of Church]
Approved By	[Church Body or Other Governing Authority]
Effective Date	[Month Day, Year]
Last Reviewed	[Month Day, Year]

Preamble

We, the members of [Church Name], grateful for the grace of God in Jesus Christ and seeking to order our life together under the authority of Scripture, establish this Constitution to define our identity, doctrine, membership, governance, and mission. This Constitution is intended to provide clarity, preserve unity, protect the church, and help the congregation faithfully fulfill the Great Commission.

Article I. Name and Principal Office

The name of this church shall be [Legal Name of Church], also known as [Common Ministry Name, if applicable]. The principal office and primary place of ministry shall be located at [Street Address, City, State, ZIP], or at such other location as the church may determine.

Article II. Purpose

The purpose of this church is to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ through worship, biblical instruction, fellowship, ministry, evangelism, missions, and faithful stewardship of all resources entrusted to the church.

- To worship God in spirit and truth.
- To proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ locally and globally.
- To baptize believers and observe the Lord's Supper.
- To teach and obey the Scriptures.
- To equip believers for ministry and service.
- To care for the church family and the surrounding community.

Article III. Statement of Faith

This church affirms the Bible as the inspired, truthful, and authoritative Word of God. The church may adopt a fuller statement of faith in its bylaws or by congregational action. As a sample provision, the church may affirm the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 or another doctrinal statement consistent with its convictions.

All teaching, preaching, ministry, employment, facility use, and official communication of the church shall be consistent with the church's doctrinal convictions.

Article IV. Church Polity and Governance

This church is an autonomous congregation under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The final earthly authority for the affairs of the church rests with the congregation, acting in accordance with this Constitution, the Bylaws, and applicable law.

The congregation may delegate responsibilities to pastors, staff, officers, trustees, committees, ministry teams, or other leaders, but such delegation does not remove the congregation's ultimate authority as defined by the governing documents.

Article V. Membership

Membership is open to persons who profess faith in Jesus Christ, have been baptized as believers, affirm the church's doctrine, and agree to support the mission, unity, and governance of the church.

The qualifications, process for receiving members, responsibilities of members, discipline, restoration, and removal from membership shall be set forth in the Bylaws.

Article VI. Ordinances

Section 1. Baptism

Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience that publicly identifies the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a memorial meal by which believers remember the death of Christ, proclaim the gospel, examine themselves, and look forward to His return. The schedule and administration of the Lord's Supper shall be determined by the church or its designated leaders.

Article VII. Pastors, Officers, and Leadership

The church may call pastors and elect officers, trustees, committees, and other leaders as provided in the Bylaws. These leaders shall serve the church by equipping the saints, guarding doctrine, promoting unity, and helping the church fulfill its mission.

The qualifications, selection, responsibilities, accountability, and removal of pastors, officers, trustees, and committee members shall be set forth in the Bylaws and related policies.

Article VIII. Church Meetings

The church shall hold regular and special business meetings as provided in the Bylaws. Members shall receive appropriate notice of business meetings, and the church shall maintain minutes of congregational actions.

Unless otherwise stated in this Constitution or the Bylaws, the church may conduct its business according to a process that promotes prayerful discussion, consensus where possible, and orderly decision making.

Article IX. Property and Assets

All property and assets of the church shall be held, managed, and used for the ministry purposes of the church and in a manner consistent with its doctrine. The purchase, sale, mortgage, lease, or transfer of real property shall be conducted according to the Bylaws and applicable law.

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of any private individual, except that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered and reasonable reimbursement may be made for ministry expenses.

Article X. Relationship with Other Churches and Ministries

The church may voluntarily cooperate with associations, conventions, networks, missions agencies, and other ministries that further the purposes of the church and do not compromise its doctrine, autonomy, or mission.

Article XI. Indemnification

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the church may indemnify its pastors, officers, trustees, employees, committee members, and authorized agents for actions taken in good faith within the scope of their authorized responsibilities, subject to the limitations and procedures established in the Bylaws or applicable policy.

Article XII. Dissolution

Upon dissolution of the church, and after all debts and obligations are satisfied, remaining assets shall be distributed to one or more organizations that are organized and operated for religious or charitable purposes and that are consistent with the doctrine and mission of the church. No assets shall be distributed to any private individual.

Article XIII. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the church, provided the proposed amendment has been presented in writing at a previous business meeting or otherwise distributed to the membership according to the notice requirements in the Bylaws.

Amendments to this Constitution shall require an affirmative vote of [two-thirds or three-fourths] of the members present and voting, unless a higher threshold is required by law or by another provision of this Constitution.

Certificate of Adoption

This Constitution was adopted by the members of [Church Name] at a duly called business meeting held on [Month Day, Year].

Moderator: _____ Date: _____

Pastor: _____ Date: _____

Church Clerk: _____ Date: _____