

Constitution and By-Laws
THE GATHERING CHURCH
Ratified: January 3rd, 2011
Revised: June 5th, 2016
Revised: June 25th, 2017

ARTICLE I. Name

The name of this church shall be: THE GATHERING CHURCH

ARTICLE II. Foundation, Purpose, Priorities, and Affiliation

1. The *foundation* of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (*I Corinthians 3:11*) and its code of guidance in all its affairs is the unchanging and timeless Word of God, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (*Mark 13:31*).

2. The *purpose* of this Church shall be to worship God according to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, to practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament, to aid in Christian discipleship, to sustain its ordinances and doctrines, to preach, and propagate among all peoples the Gospel of Salvation which is by personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

3. The *priorities* of ministry of this church flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in the person life and mission of Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (*John 4:23*), strengthen this vision through nurture and education (*I Corinthians 14:26; II Peter 3:18*), and spread this vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds both at home and abroad (*I Peter 2:9; 3:15; Matthew 28:18-20; 5:16*).

4. This church shall maintain *affiliation*, through friendly cooperation with the organization currently known as Conservative Baptist Northwest.

ARTICLE III. Statement of Faith

1. The Word of God

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God. We believe that the Bible is fully and completely inspired and without error in the original manuscripts and in its complete form. We believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is true in all that it intends to say and does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact. The Bible has the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and without error in the original writings, complete in its revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. In matters

not specifically addressed in the Bible, what is true and right is assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture.

II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20, 21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31, 32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

2. The Triune God

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in his love and in his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, he perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about his eternal good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1, 3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19, 20; Ephesians 4:5, 6

3. God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, goodness, and love. We believe that he infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that he sovereignly rules over all things, that he concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that he hears and answers prayer, and that he saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

Luke 10:21, 22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1, 2; 2:5, 6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

4. God the Son, Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit, the Word became flesh, fully God and fully human being, one Person in two natures. The man Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, was conceived through the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary. He perfectly obeyed his heavenly Father, lived a sinless life, performed miraculous signs, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. We believe that Jesus makes perpetual intercession for His people, and that he will personally and visibly return to earth to judge the living and the dead and to make all things new.

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:46; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30,31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9, 10; Hebrews 7:25; I Timothy 3:16; Col. 1:15-20

5. God the Holy Spirit

We believe that salvation, is secured by Jesus Christ, and is applied to his people by the Holy Spirit. Sent by the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and is present with and

in believers as the Helper. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and by his powerful and mysterious work regenerates spiritually dead sinners, awakening them to repentance and faith, baptizing them into union with the Lord Jesus. The Spirit enables believers to be renewed, sanctified, and adopted into God's family; they participate in the divine nature and receive his sovereignly distributed gifts.

John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26, 27; John 16:9-14; Titus 3:5; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; 12-14; Galatians 5:22-26

6. The Nature of Humanity

We believe God created both male and female in His own image for fellowship with Him; that man sinned against God and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature, are sinners by choice, and are therefore under righteous, divine condemnation. This inward corruption is radical and pervasive. It extends to every human being's mind, will, central desires, and emotions. Unregenerate mankind lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God, and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ.

Both men and women are made in the image of God. Both men and women have dominion over the earth (all God's creation). In Christ, men and women have the same equal standing and direct access to God. Though equal, men and women have different roles in life, the family, and in the church.

Genesis 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17;3:19; Romans 1:18-32, 3:9-19, 23; I Timothy 2:13, 14

7. The Gospel of Salvation

We believe the Gospel is the good news that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a once for all, in our place and on our behalf as a substitute, and the propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins; that all who repent, forsake sin, and place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, are delivered and saved from condemnation and have received eternal life. Jesus Christ's historic death on the cross, was the fulfillment of the Scriptures, it actually saves us from the wrath of God, reconciles us to God, was witnessed and transmitted to us by the Apostles, and requires an intensely personal response. Jesus Christ's historic resurrection from the dead was the fulfillment of the Scriptures, it actually gives us new life and gives us freedom from sin, death, and the devil.

John 1:12-13, 3:14-21; 5:24; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 3:21-26; 5:19; I John 1:9; II Corinthians 5:17, Rom. 8:1; Col 1:19-22; I Timothy 1:15; I Corinthians 15:13-17; I Thessalonians 2:4, I John 5:1

8. Christian Conduct and Evidence of Salvation

We believe that a Christian should live solely for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow

man; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful and generous steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. We believe biblical salvation is characterized by godly sorrow, repentance, and embracing Christ as one's Savior, Lord, and Treasure. This "re-birth" through the Spirit is evidenced by new affections for God and hatred for sin, desires to please Him and not the world, and good works rooted in the obedience of faith.

I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2, 14; John 14:15, 23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 1:9-10, Hebrews 2:10-11, 12:1-2, 14; II Peter 3:11-14; Ephesians 4:17-32, Titus 1:16, 2:10-15; Ephesians 2:10

9. Sanctification

We believe the Holy Spirit is the indwelling active agent in our progressive sanctification; that he seeks to produce His fruit in us as our minds are renewed by His Word and we are conformed to the image of Christ; that though our battle with indwelling sin continues throughout our lives, as we are led by the Spirit, we are enabled to walk in the Spirit and so delight in God's commandments and truly endeavor to live in this world for the glory of God.

Galatians 3:1-6, 5:16-26; I Corinthians 1:1-2, 30; II Corinthians 3:17-18; 4:2, 6:17-18; Romans 6:11-14, 8:29, 12:1-3; Colossians 3:5-9; I Thessalonians 4:3-7; I John 2:3-6; John 14:15, 23-27, 15:11

10. Perseverance

We believe all Christians are exhorted by God to persevere in their faith, knowing that they will give an account to God for their every word and deed; that the spiritual disciplines of Bible study, prayer, worship, giving, fellowship, fasting and confession of sin are provided by God as vital means of grace to assist us in our pursuit of holiness; that the believer's ultimate confidence of persevering in the faith is based solely on the grace and promise of God to keep all those who are His to the end.

Galatians 5:1-15, 6:11-18; I Timothy 4:15-16; James 1:12; Matthew 6:1-18, 10:22, 24:13

11. The Church

We believe the church exists to worship God, nurture believers, and evangelize the lost. We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, evangelism, discipleship and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world through preaching the Gospel and planting churches as visible evidence of salvation.

Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-23; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25; Matthew 16:18, Acts 8:1, 11:22, 15:13-21, 20:28; I Cor. 1:11-17, 3:9-16, 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; I Timothy 3:15; Matthew 28:18-20

12. Church Ordinances

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. The former is connected with entrance into the new covenant community and best portrayed by immersion of the believer in water in the name of the triune God, the latter with ongoing covenant renewal. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, a divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of his return and of the consummation of all things. We believe that only those who give a believable profession of faith and who give reasonable evidence of believing in Christ should be baptized or partake in the communion elements. The elders of the Gathering Community Church largely rely on believing parents to discern and testify to a believable profession of faith in their children and strongly encourage parents to participate in the church ordinances in a manner consistent with the New Testament.

Acts 2:41, 8:12, 10:47-48, 16:14-15, Colossians 2:11-12, Romans 6:1-11, Galatians 3:2,5, 24-29; I Corinthians 11:23-30; Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:17-20.

13. Liberty

We believe that every human being has direct relationship with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; though the church is free from outside ecclesiastical interference yet it may submit itself to the counsel, wisdom, and arbitration of outside ecclesiastical authority when necessary. Church and State, therefore, must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

I Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9, 12

14. The Doctrine of the Future

We believe the consummation of all things will happen in the visible and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ to judge the just and the unjust and to fulfill His kingdom in the establishing the new heavens and the new earth. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the endless, conscious suffering of the wicked in hell.

Matthew 24:44, 25:13; Mark 13:32-33; Luke 12:40; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 1:9-11, 4:13-17; Hebrews 9:28, James 5:8; I John 3:2; Revelation 20:11-15, 22:8-20

ARTICLE IV. Membership

Section 1 - General

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ, who give evidence of a changed heart, and who has been baptized. 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. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 2 - Admission

To be admitted into church membership, applicant shall be recommended by the Council of Elders for admission and accepted by the two-thirds vote of the members at any Member Meeting.

The Council of Elders shall acquaint all persons uniting with this church with the Membership Covenant and the Statement of Faith.

Section 3 - Termination of Membership

Should members choose to unite with another church members shall inform the Council of Elders of such a decision.

Members, who unite with another church without such disclosure, shall be removed from the Church roll. Members who move from this city, and do not so report, shall be dropped from the Church roll after appropriate efforts have been made to contact the member and remind them of their responsibility.

Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the Council of Elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special Member Meeting.

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 any other biblical reason.

Section 4 - Church Discipline

The purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church, to edify believers by deterring sin, and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct.

The Gathering Church may terminate the membership of any member. Members of The Gathering Church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture, shall be subject to church discipline. Each potential case of discipline will be weighed on its own merits and dealt with according to Scripture.

Members of The Gathering Church are not guaranteed confidentiality regarding issues of church discipline, and understand that in submitting themselves to the authority of the church, issues of a sensitive or personal nature may become known to others. This includes, but is not limited to, notification of the authorities if a crime has been committed or if a real threat of someone is being

endangered exists, as well as other violations of Scripture that may not result in physical danger.

Members of The Gathering Church, and every other professing Christian who regularly attends or fellowships with this church, agrees that there shall be no appeal to any court because of a discipline process or dismissal.

Section 5 - Restoration

Any person whose membership has been terminated for church discipline, or for reasons other than uniting with another church, may be restored upon evidence of such individual's repentance. Any member who is removed from membership for uniting with another church may be readmitted to membership upon compliance with the requirements for any new member.

Section 6 - Member Responsibilities

Members should be faithful to a New Testament Christian life and attend the services of the Church. Each member shall strive to live according to the Scriptures as the standard of Christian conduct. After studying the Bible's teachings on stewardship, members shall contribute regularly of their income to support the Church, and accept their responsibility to use their time and talents, in its work to meet the needs of the community and witness for Jesus Christ.

Section 7 - Relational Commitments

Relationships in the church will be guided and governed by the biblical principles set forth in a document entitled "Relational Commitments," which is incorporated into these By-Laws by reference. This document establishes our commitments related to peacemaking and reconciliation, accountability and church discipline, preserving marriages, biblical counseling and confidentiality, and the protection of our children. These Commitments shall apply to members of our church, and may be amended, by the Council of Elders, in the manner prescribed by these By-Laws.

Section 8 - Membership Covenant

The Membership Covenant involves a recognition and commitment to The Gathering Church. A member proclaims that they have been saved from their sins through Christ's work on the cross and that they have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They have read the Statement of Faith and Council of Elder position papers and agree to not be divisive to their teaching; rather, a member will seek to preserve the unity and peace of the community, worshiping God in all they do, growing in the truth of God's word, and actively pursuing a life that reflects the Gospel to our world.

Section 9 – Member Meetings

Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the Congregation of the Church is the final authority within this local Church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of officers

to govern the Church. However, the vote of the membership of this Church at a properly called Member Meeting, as provided in the Bylaws, shall be required to effect the following actions:

1. Accept members into the Church, give letters of transfer or recommendation to members, or drop members from the Church roll.
2. Elect officers of the Church.
3. Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from office.
4. Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property. A budget shall be approved by the membership at a Member Meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level.
5. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Council of Elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting.
6. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or Bylaws of this church.
7. Approve the call, job description and initial salary of Vocational Pastors and Ministers.

There shall be a regular Member Meeting at least every quarter, at some time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership. The date and time of any Member Meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church two weeks preceding the Member Meeting.

An elder designated by the Council of Elders shall preside as moderator at all Member Meeting of the church. The Council of 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 Member Meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the Council of Elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level.

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

Special Member Meetings may be called as required by the Council of Elders, or at the written request, submitted to the Council of Elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special Member Meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the Member Meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the Council of Elders shall call a special Member Meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

Section 10 – Statement on Gender, Marriage, and Sexuality

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (*Gen 2:18-25*) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (*I Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4*) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual behavior, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (*Matthew 15:18-20; I Corinthians 6:9-10*)

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of The Gathering Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the The Gathering Church’s members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by The Gathering Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Gender, Marriage and Sexuality. (*Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; I Thessalonians 5:22*)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (*Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; I Corinthians 6:9-11*)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (*Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31*) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of The Gathering Church.

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, The Gathering Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the officers of The Gathering Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman, and where either the bride or groom is a member of The Gathering Church. Finally, the facilities and property of The Gathering Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman, and where either the bride or groom is a member of The Gathering Church.

ARTICLE V. Government

Section 1 - General

The polity of The Gathering Church shall be consistent with the New Testament model of a two-office church, made up of biblically qualified male elders and biblically qualified deacons.

In addition, the church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer.

ARTICLE VI. Elders - General, Qualification, Selection, Duties, and Organization

Section 1 – General

The elders at The Gathering Church serve as under shepherds to lead the church. The Council of Elders shall be the governing body (Board of Directors) and the officers of The Gathering Church. The Council of Elders shall choose from among them one to serve as the Chairman and one to serve as the Vice Chairman. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these By-Laws, the Church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

Section 2 - Qualification

To be an elder, a man must have been called by God into leadership at The Gathering Church and be a man of the exemplary Christian character according to the qualifications of Scripture (*I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and I Peter 5:1-4*).

An elder must be a member of The Gathering Church and accept the faith, mission, and values of this Church as expressed in the Statement of Faith and the Council of Elder position papers.

Section 3 – Selection

The election of officers shall be held at a Member Meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders shall be presented by the Council of Elders at the previous Member Meeting (providing that previous Member Meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator. Eight week holdover is not required for the reaffirmation of a currently serving elder, but only for newly nominated elders. Returning elders only require a public announcement a minimum of two weeks preceding a Member Meeting.

The Council of 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 Council of Elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the Council of Elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church Member Meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a two-thirds majority of all votes cast for the office of elder. 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.

An elder shall have the authority to preach, administer the ordinances of the church, marry, and enjoy all the rights and privileges accorded to licensed or ordained ministers and clergy under secular law.

The Council of Elders may also license non-ordained ministers to have authority to preach, administer the ordinances of the church, marry, and enjoy all the rights and privileges accorded to licensed or ordained ministers under secular law.

Section 4 - Duties

The Council of 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, oversee 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 local and world missions. The Council of Elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

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

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

Each year the Council of Elders shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a Member Meeting and called up for a vote at the following Member Meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the Council of Elders.

The Council of Elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of Member Meetings.

Section 5 – Organization

Each elder shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The Council of Elders must meet at least once per month. Meetings of the Council of Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication. Unless the Council provides otherwise, meetings of the Council may be held immediately upon notice. A quorum for meetings of the Elders is defined as at least 50%. The Council of Elders shall consist of at least three elders. If a vacancy on the Council of Elders occurs, for whatever reason, and the number of Elders on the council becomes less than three, a temporary, ad hoc member of the congregation will be appointed to serve until a duly appointed elder may be appointed. In no case may an ad hoc member serve for more than 90 days unless an extension is approved by the membership at Member Meeting.

ARTICLE VII. Elders - Duration, Resignation, and Removal

Section 1 - Duration

A non-vocational elder may serve up to two consecutive 3-year terms, after which point he may only be elected to the office of elder after one year not serving. A vocational elder is not subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out for non-vocational elders.

Section 2 – Resignation

To resign from the Council of Elders, an elder must notify the Council of Elders by letter no less than 60 days prior to its effectiveness. It is understood that some extenuating circumstances may require a reduction of this notice, which will be reviewed by the Council.

Section 3 – Removal

Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders will oversee the process of church discipline. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in *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 Member Meeting of the church.

The Council of Elders may recommend the removal of an elder at any Member Meeting.

ARTICLE VIII. Deacons - General, Qualification, Selection, Duties, and Organization

Section 1 - General

Deacons are under the oversight of the Council of Elders. Deacons serve and build the church spiritually by carrying out essential practical ministry designated by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders shall determine the number and duties of deacons.

Section 2 – Qualification

Deacons shall be those of exemplary Christian character according to the qualifications of Scripture (*I Timothy 3:8-12*).

A deacon must be a member of The Gathering Church and accept the faith, the mission and values of this Church as expressed in the Statement of Faith and the Council of Elder position papers.

Section 3 – Selection

The election of deacons shall be held at a Member Meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as deacons shall be presented by the Council of Elders at the previous Member Meeting (providing that previous Member Meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The Council of 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 Council of 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 Member Meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all people receiving a two-thirds majority of all votes cast for the office of deacon. 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 4 – Duties

The deacons shall be ready to assist the Council of Elders in any service that supports them to be devoted to the ministry of the Word and prayer. The deacons also serve by meeting practical needs so the Word can spread unhindered. The Council of Elders may give specific responsibilities or tasks to deacons.

Section 5 – Organization

The deacons shall organize however they determine best to achieve the mission of the Church, under the oversight of the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE IX. Deacons - Duration, Resignation, and Removal

Section 1 - Duration

The term of office for a deacon is two years. Upon recommendation of the Council of Elders the church may reaffirm a deacon after their term has expired.

Section 2 – Resignation

To resign from the office of Deacon, a deacon must notify the Council of Elders by letter. When possible, a deacon must notify the Council of Elders by letter no less than 60 days prior its effectiveness.

Section 3 – Removal

Any two members with reason to believe that a deacon should be dismissed should express such concern to the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders will oversee the process of church discipline. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in *Matthew 18:15–17*. Any of the deacons may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any Member Meeting of the church. Eight week holdover is not required for the reaffirmation of a currently serving deacon, but only for newly nominated deacons. Returning deacons only require a public announcement a minimum of two weeks preceding a Member Meeting.

The Council of Elders may recommend the removal of a deacon at any Member Meeting. A deacon may be removed by the two-thirds vote of the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE X. Church Clerk and Treasurer

Section 1 – Clerk

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

The clerk shall be nominated by the Council of Elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year.

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

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

Section 2 – Treasurer

The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, deacon, or paid church staff member, 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 Member Meeting; this responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the Council of Elders. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church.

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

ARTICLE XI. Church Property and Dissolution

In the event of a division of this church the property of this church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the church membership before recognizing a division therein provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division.

In the event of dissolution of the Corporation, property of the Church shall be distributed as follows. All property, real or personal, owned by the Corporation shall be, and hereby is irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes and uses, and upon liquidation, dissolution or abandonment of the Corporation will not ensue to the benefit of any private person except through a fund, foundation or corporation

organized and operated for evangelical religious purposes determined by this congregation if possible otherwise by CB Northwest.

ARTICLE XII. Revisions & Amendments

The Statement of Faith, Constitution, and Church Covenant may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a Member Meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous Member Meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.