

Goss Memorial Church

Church Constitution

Approved August 29, 2021

CONSTITUTION
OF
GOSS MEMORIAL CHURCH

PREAMBLE

Goss Memorial Church of Akron, Ohio, ordains this Constitution and By-Laws to be its fundamental law for government, doctrine, and worship to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

This constitution shall not be suspended or abrogated and shall remain in force as presently formulated or as duly amended until this corporation is legally dissolved.

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this church shall be GOSS MEMORIAL CHURCH OF AKRON, by which name it is incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio.

ARTICLE II

It is the purpose of Goss Memorial to influence Akron, our communities, and the world through the worship of God, growing as disciples, and sharing Christ with others. Key elements of carrying out our purpose include worshiping both publicly and privately; encouraging individual and family growth and obedience; and regular opportunities to share our faith locally and globally.

ARTICLE III

ARTICLES OF FAITH

A. We believe in ONE TRIUNE GOD eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfection, including holiness, love, wisdom, mercy, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience and righteousness. References for reading: Matthew 28:19, Deuteronomy 6:4, John 10:30, II Corinthians 13:14.

B. We believe in THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, second person of the Trinity. The primary and essential facts concerning Him are well authenticated: (1) super-natural birth, being conceived by the Holy Spirit, begotten by God the Father, and born of a virgin; (2) sinless life; (3) substitutionary death; (4) bodily resurrection; (5) ascension into Heaven; (6) sending forth of the Holy Spirit (7) future gathering of His believers (8) his bodily return (9) establishing His 1000-year physical kingdom and (10) His eternal reign on a new heaven and earth. References for reading: Isaiah 53:5-6; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:30-35; John 8:46; Romans 5:6-8; I Corinthians 5:21; I Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 7:26; Revelation 19:19-20:5; Acts 1:10.

C. We believe in THE HOLY SPIRIT, third person of the Trinity. He carries out His functions, as the representative of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth in this age, by convicting and regenerating sinners. He indwells, baptizes, teaches, guides, comforts, seals, and sanctifies believers. References for reading: John 16: 7-11; John 3:5; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 2:10-16, 6:11.

D. We believe in **THE HOLY SCRIPTURES** accepting them as being divinely inspired in their entirety, therefore inerrant as originally given. They are an all-sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice. References for reading: Psalm 119:89; John 10:35; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21.

E. We believe in **A LITERAL SIX DAY CREATION AND THE FALL OF MAN**. Man was created by God in His image. Man, created in God's image, is distinct from any animal creation. God created humans male and female according to birth. By deliberate disobedience to the will of God, man became a sinful creature, the fall affecting the whole human race. Being sinful in both nature and practice, he is under the just judgment of a holy God Who has provided the perfect plan of salvation for mankind's recovery and redemption. References for reading: Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7, 3:1-24; Mark 7:21-23; John 8:44; Romans 3:23, 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:18.

F. We believe in **THE DISTINCT PERSONALITY OF SATAN**. He is the author of all the powers of darkness and sin, the open and declared enemy of God and mankind, and he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. References for reading: Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14: 12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; II Corinthians 4:4; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10.

G. We believe in **SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH**. Because man is sinful, he is separated from God. Jesus Christ's life on earth, substitutionary death and resurrection result in the only way for man to be reconciled to God. Any man that believes these facts in his heart, repents for sin, and confesses with his mouth, will receive Salvation from eternal damnation, and will be eternally secure in a life forever with God. Salvation is in no way merited by the works of man. References for reading: John 10:28, Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:5-6; 1 John 1:9.

H. We believe in **FUTURE LIFE AND ETERNAL EXISTENCE**. There will be a resurrection of the bodies of both the just and the unjust. The spirits of believers at death depart immediately to be present with the Redeemer until the rapture of the church when their bodies are to be changed into the likeness of His own glorified body. The spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades, the place of punishment where they are kept awaiting the Great White Throne Judgment at which time they will be assigned to the Lake of Fire, the place of final and everlasting punishment. References for reading: Luke 16:19-31; Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15: 51-58; II Corinthians 5:1-8; Philippians 3:20-21; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20: 5-6, 11-15.

I. We believe in **ONE TRUE CHURCH**. It is composed of all born-again believers and is known in Scripture as the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. All believers are exhorted to observe the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism and are expected to assemble themselves with one another in local congregations for worship, prayer, fellowship, witnessing, and personal spiritual growth. References for reading: Ephesians 4:3-6, 5:25-32; I Corinthians 11: 23-34; Hebrews 10:24-25.

J. We believe **THE GREAT COMMISSION** is the responsibility of the worldwide Church (see point I). We believe the commission given by Jesus demands the obedience of every true

believer. The love of Christ received by and shared among believers compels our obedience. We desire to train believers who will labor to this end, including evangelism and disciple-making both locally and globally. Matthew 28:18-20; II Timothy 4:1-5. Acts 19:8-10; John 13:34-35; John 14:21-24.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

Any person professing faith in Jesus Christ, having been baptized as a believer, may be eligible for membership in Goss Memorial Church. The individual will make written application and then be interviewed by the Pastor and at least two Elders as to their Christian experience and basis of salvation. Church membership in no way should be interpreted as a requirement for salvation. The individual will be required to submit to the Articles of Faith and Constitution of the church. Upon approval by the Elders, the applicant shall be presented to the congregation. Members willingly bear Jesus' call to sacrificial servanthood as evidenced by their commitment to the purpose of the church through attendance, participation, giving, and service.

Since we recognize the Holy Scriptures as the final rule of faith and practice, members guilty of misconduct which brings reproach upon Christ and His church shall be disciplined. All actions of discipline lie in the hands of the Elders. See Matthew 18:15-18.

Members 18 years and older may vote on congregational business. Membership may be terminated in any of the following ways: 1) by death 2) by dismissal 3) by verbal or written request 4) by joining another church 5) following a period of six months of inactivity in the absence of communication with the Elders.

ARTICLE V

GOVERNMENT

The Elders are entrusted by the membership as the governing body of Goss Memorial Church. The Elders consist of qualified men elected from the congregation as well as full-time Pastoral staff, or possibly part-time staff (see Article VI). Each elder will have an equal vote. A president, vice-president, and secretary shall be elected among the Elders. A church treasurer and financial secretary, who do not need to be Elders, shall be appointed annually by the Elders.

The Elders shall lead, provide direction, care, counsel, and spiritual protection for the congregation of Goss Memorial Church. The Elders shall also have oversight over hiring and termination of any additional staff.

In addition to his duties as an Elder, the Senior Pastor shall lead in training and making disciples, preaching and teaching, basic staff shepherding and oversight, and pastoral care. The Senior Pastor's job description will be reviewed and administrated by the Elders.

The membership will approve the calling or removal of the Senior Pastor; calling or removal of Elders; buying, selling, and leasing of real estate; changes to the Constitution; and the annual budget. The Elders shall be defined as the Trustees of the church, which is incorporated in the State of Ohio, and these Trustees shall exercise all of the authority assigned by the laws of the state. The Elders shall meet at least monthly utilizing Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE VI

QUALIFICATIONS, SELECTION, AND REMOVAL OF LEADERSHIP

Selection of Elders: Men can become elders in one of three ways. 1) Any full time Pastor becomes an Elder upon hire. 2) Any other paid staff can become an Elder if willing and

recommended by a three-fourths vote of the current Elders. 3) By recommendation either by current Elders or the congregation. These non-staff Elders require three-fourths recommendation of current Elders and two-thirds affirmation from the congregation. In addition, non-staff Elders must be members at least two years prior to serving. Non staff Elders must outnumber Pastors and paid ministry staff Elders. There shall be a minimum of three and a maximum of nine Elders. All Elders must meet the qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-7.

Removal of Elders: Elders can be immediately removed either 1) by unanimous vote of all other elders or 2) by two-thirds vote from the membership at a special meeting.

Selection of Senior Pastor: The Elders must unanimously recommend a Senior Pastor candidate to the congregation and he must be affirmed by a three-fourths vote of the membership. The Senior Pastor will be a full voting member of the Elders.

Removal of Senior Pastor: The Senior Pastor can be removed either 1) at the unanimous recommendation of all non-staff elders in addition to a three-fourths membership approval or 2) through membership request of a special meeting as described in this document with three-fourths membership approval.

Terms: Elders are elected to two-year terms. There shall be no term limits. The Elders will annually evaluate each man's position and ability to continue serving.

Deacons and Deaconesses: The Elders shall appoint biblically qualified Deacons and Deaconesses as needed for the functioning of the church. Deacons and Deaconesses shall be members at least one year prior to appointment and meet both general and gender specific qualifications in I Timothy 3:8-13.

ARTICLE VII

MINISTRY TEAMS

The Elders shall oversee and approve the leaders of various ministry teams. At minimum, teams will include Christian Education, Missions, Finance, Building, and Business. Leaders of these teams shall either be a current Elder or an appointed Deacon / Deaconess. Both lead Deacons and Deaconesses as well as all other members of ministry teams shall be approved annually by the Elders. Each team will meet as needed for the execution of their responsibilities. Each team will be expected to submit a report for the annual congregational meeting in addition to communicating with the Elders monthly. Any necessary policy and procedure used by each team shall be developed in collaboration with and approved by the Elders.

ARTICLE VIII

BUSINESS MEETINGS

Business meetings may be called in one of two ways:

1. By the Elders. The annual congregational meeting will be held the third Sunday of November each year and announced two weeks prior. This meeting will, at minimum, communicate the financial position of the church and allow the membership to approve the budget. The congregation will also have opportunity to affirm elders as needed. Special congregational meetings may be held from time to time as issues arise. A special meeting must be announced one week prior to the meeting. Ten percent of members will constitute a quorum for both the annual meeting and any special meeting called by the Elders.

2. By the congregation. The congregation may call a meeting to address a specific issue at the written request of one-third of members. The Elders shall give notice within two weeks of receiving the request. One week's notice will be provided for such a meeting.

Ten percent of members will constitute a quorum.

A two-thirds majority of those in attendance shall be required to carry all business decisions. All congregational meetings shall utilize Robert's Rulers of Order.

Members must be present to vote.

ARTICLE IX

ORDINATION

The Elders shall oversee the ordination of any men showing calling and aptitude for pastoral ministry. An ordination council of current Elders in addition to any other invited leaders will evaluate a candidate based on his character, ministry competence, and suitable defense of doctrinal beliefs.

ARTICLE X

ORDINANCES AND OBSERVANCES

A. The Ordinance of Baptism

Baptism shall be administered to believers. We believe all believers are commanded to be baptized upon an understanding of and ability to give testimony to their salvation. Baptism should be administered by a person of spiritual influence or leadership in their lives. The mode shall be immersion unless otherwise needed or requested.

B. The Ordinance of Communion

Communion shall be planned and carried out by the Elders.

C. Observances

We will also hold infant dedication, weddings, and funerals as the need may arise. These observances will be held in accordance with our Articles of Faith, Wedding Policy, and the discretion of our Elders.

ARTICLE XI

PROPERTY

The church may, in its corporate name, sue and be sued, hold, purchase, and receive title by gift, grant, or other conveyance of and to any property real or personal with power to mortgage, sell, or convey the same, within the provisions of the laws of the state of Ohio. No real property may be purchased, sold, exchanged, mortgaged, or otherwise encumbered except by two-thirds vote of the membership present at a duly called congregational meeting.

ARTICLE XII

AMENDMENTS

Additions and/or alterations to this constitution may be proposed in any duly called meeting of the congregation. The proposed additions and/or alterations shall be referred to the Elders, which shall consider the same and report at a subsequent meeting of the congregation. Said additions and alterations can be adopted only by at least a two-thirds majority of all voting members present.

ARTICLE XIII

BY-LAWS

We propose moving forward without by-laws. The needed content of the by-laws has been incorporated in the twelve articles proposed.