

**THE CONSTITUTION OF
GARDEN VALLEY BIBLE CHURCH
Garden Valley, Texas**

NAME

This church shall be known as Garden Valley Bible Church.

MISSION STATEMENT

To introduce others to the Lord Jesus Christ and help them become His disciples.

SLOGAN

"Making Disciples As We Go . . ."

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

1. **The Scripture:** We believe that all Scripture of the Old and New Testaments is verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings; and that it is of supreme and final authority in faith and life. The Scripture is given to man that he might know God, and that he might know God's will for man. (2 Timothy 3: 16,17; 2 Peter 1:21)
2. **The Godhead:** We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and worthy of the same confidence and obedience. Matthew 28:18,19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)
3. **The Christ:** We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He came to reveal God to mankind and to redeem our sinful race by giving Himself as a sinless substitutionary sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, satisfying God's righteous judgments against sin. He then arose bodily from the dead and ascended to the Father's right hand, where He intercedes on the believer's behalf. (John 1:1-12, 14, 18; Luke 1:34,35; Romans 3:24-26; 8:34)
4. **Man Created and Fallen:** We believe man's purpose is to glorify God. Man was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, but fell because of sin, and as a consequence was separated from God. Therefore man in his natural state is condemned to an eternal death. (Genesis 1:26; 3:1-24; Romans 6:23)
5. **Salvation:** We believe that man may have salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin through personal trust in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for man's sin. Through faith alone in Jesus Christ, man is born again, receives a new nature, and has the promise of eternal life. Salvation cannot come through works, but only through the grace of God. We believe that at death the souls of believers pass immediately into the presence of Christ; the souls of unbelievers pass immediately into torment to be separated from God forever. (1 Peter 2:24; John 3:3,16; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20: 11-15)

6. **The Holy Spirit:** We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Person of the Trinity who convicts the world of sin, gives eternal life to those who place their trust in Christ, unites all believers in one body, indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, fills (controls) those who are yielding to Him, and empowers and gifts them for service. He seeks to direct their attention not to themselves nor to their experience, but to Christ. (John 3:5-8; 14:16,17; 16:7-14; 1 Corinthians 12:13; ; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18; Acts 1:8)
7. **Eternal Security and the Assurance of the Believer:** We believe that those who have put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation have the promise of eternal life as a permanent possession. It is the privilege of the believer to have a present and continuing assurance that he possesses salvation, and this salvation can never be lost or forfeited. (John 5:24; 10:28-30; Ephesians 4:30; 1 John 5:11-13)
8. **Satan and Sin:** We believe that Satan is a created being and that he fell to his present state because of sin. He has been judged and defeated through the death and resurrection of Christ and will be eternally punished in the lake of fire. He is the author of sin. Sin is anything contrary to or falling short of the glory of God. We recognize that Christians are in a spiritual warfare against Satan and his forces. Though he is a defeated foe, the Christian can have victory in his daily battle only by the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Satan's desire is to oppress believers and prevent the salvation of unbelievers. (Isaiah 14: 12-17; Genesis 3:1-19; John 8:44;12:31; Revelation 20:10; I John 5:17; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23; 1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:11-22)
9. **The Church:** We believe that all who have placed their faith in Christ are united by the Holy Spirit into one spiritual body, the Church, of which Christ is the Head. This body was formed on the day of Pentecost and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own. The members of this one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies for instruction, worship, prayer, fellowship, service, and the administration of the ordinances -- baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are likewise to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (1 Corinthians 12:1-3; Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 2: 42-47; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Ephesians 4:3)
10. **The Return of Christ:** We believe in the imminent, personal return of Jesus Christ. He will descend from heaven to receive to Himself both His own who are alive and remain until His coming, and all who have died in Jesus. This event is the blessed hope set before us in Scripture; for this we should be constantly looking because no man knows the time of His coming. (John 14: 1-3; 1 Corinthians 15: 51,52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.)
11. **The Christian Walk:** We believe that the Christian is commanded in the Word of God to live a godly life *in* the world, but not *of* it. This can only be accomplished by living in dependence upon the Holy Spirit so as to reveal the fruit of the Spirit. The life of the believer should be fruitful in spiritual service and lived for the glory of God. (Romans 6:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:18-19; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18; Galatians 5:16-24; John 15:1-8; Romans 12:1-2)
12. **Spiritual Gifts:** Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities for service. Every believer is equipped with spiritual gifts to be exercised "for the edification of the church" and for the glory of the Lord. While we recognize differences of opinion regarding the present-day role of sign gifts, it is not our emphasis or practice to promote their public exercise. (1 Corinthians 14:12; 1 Peter 4:10,11; Romans 12: 8-12; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:11-16)
(amended 09-09-01, 01-27-02)
13. **Baptism:** This church will practice believers' baptism by immersion, but recognizes other forms of baptism for membership. (Acts 2:38-41; Matthew 28:18-20)

DOCTRINAL POSITIONS (approved 1-22-2017)

These doctrinal positions do not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God, speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind. It is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For the purposes of Garden Valley Bible Church's (GVBC's) faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elder Board—elected by the members of the church—is GVBC's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

- 1. Sanctity of Human Life:** We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).
- 2. Gender:** We believe that God wonderfully and unchangingly creates each person as male and female, and that these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person (Genesis 1: 26-28; Psalm 139). 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 the Bible nor the doctrines of GVBC.
- 3. Marriage:** We believe that God created marriage exclusively to be the union between one man and one woman, and that intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that union. Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, GVBC will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Furthermore, the Pastor, Leadership, and Staff of GVBC shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. The facilities and property of GVBC shall only host weddings between one man and one woman. (Genesis 2:18-25).

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The members of Garden Valley Bible Church, through the leadership of the Pastor and elected Elders, shall determine the programs and policies of this church. The congregation will vote on the following important issues: calling of a full time Pastor and other full time ministerial staff, selection of Elders and Deacons, major facilities decisions, decisions to initiate major new ministries, adoption and change of the Constitution. All other organizational and administrative decisions are delegated to the Pastor and Elders.

ELDERS

1. **Qualifications:**
 - { They shall exhibit the characteristics described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7;
 - { They shall be in agreement with the Doctrinal Statement and Covenant of Membership;
 - { They shall have been an active member of this church for at least one year.

2. **Duties:** In collaboration with the Pastor,
 - { They shall provide leadership and exercise authority over the church;
 - { They shall have the authority to hire and dismiss all positions except elected full time pastoral staff. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if a moral or doctrinal matter is involved, the Board of Elders shall have the authority to relieve the staff member immediately.

3. **Term of Office:**
 - { Elders shall be elected for three-year terms and may succeed themselves if re-elected;
 - { Approximately one-third of the Elder terms shall expire each year;
 - { If the Elders desire to increase it's number of members, the board shall bring its request to the attention of the nominating committee, and the nominating committee shall act promptly to fill such request.

4. **Termination**
 - { The procedure for termination of an Elder is the same as for the Senior Pastor.

DEACONS

1. **Qualifications:**
 - { They shall exhibit the characteristics described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Titus 1:5-9;
 - { They shall be in agreement with the Doctrinal Statement and Covenant of Membership;
 - { They shall have been an active member of this church for at least one year.

2. **Duties:**
 - { They shall manage the temporal affairs of the church.

3. **Term of Office:**
 - { Deacons shall be elected for three-year terms and may succeed themselves if re-elected;
 - { Approximately one-third of the Deacon's terms shall expire each year;
 - { If the Deacons desire to increase it's number of members, the board shall bring its request to the attention of the Elders. The nominating committee shall be responsible to act to fill such request.

4. **Termination**
 - { The procedure for termination of an Deacon is the same as for the Senior Pastor.

PASTOR

The pastor shall be an Elder and shall meet the biblical qualifications for Elder. He will be responsible to the Elder Board. He shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees of the church.

He shall be responsible for the following:

- { Preaching and teaching the Word of God and administering the ordinances of the church;
- { Equipping the Body to do the work of ministry;
- { Exercising general leadership, and administrative and pastoral oversight;
- { Setting and championing the vision of the church;
- { Caring for the members with the love of a shepherd.

The Pastor's role is not to do all the ministry work of the church himself, but to equip the members, starting with the Elders, for serving in areas such as visiting in the hospital, calling on the sick, teaching Sunday School classes and Bible Studies, and so forth.

Termination:

If at any time the relationship of the Pastor to the church shall be deemed unsatisfactory by the Board of Elders, the Board shall meet with him and endeavor to resolve the matter. If the relationship continues to be unsatisfactory, the Board of Elders shall bring the matter before the church. A meeting for such purpose shall be held, and all active voting members shall be notified by mail of such a meeting at least two weeks prior thereto. The Pastor shall have the right to attend such meeting and to present his side of the matter. Seventy percent of the voting members constitute a required quorum for such a meeting. Likewise, seventy percent of that quorum is required to declare the Pastor's position vacant upon not less than thirty and not more than sixty days' notice. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if a moral or doctrinal matter is involved, the Board of Elders shall have the authority to relieve the Pastor of further service to the church immediately.

COMMITTEES

Nominating Committee:

1. The Nominating Committee shall consist of two members from the Board of Elders, the Pastor, and two members-at-large elected by the congregation at the annual meeting.
2. The members-at-large shall be elected from a slate of nominees prepared by the Nominating Committee and shall at the time of the election not be Elders.
3. One of the Elders appointed to the Committee, appointed by the Elders, shall serve as chairman of the committee.
4. Members of the Nominating Committee shall have been members of the church for at least one year.
5. Elder appointments to the Nominating Committee shall be for a term of one year. Elected members-at-large shall serve for three years. The elected terms shall be staggered. Terms shall begin and end at the time of the Annual Meeting.
6. The Nominating Committee shall present at the annual meeting nominations for the elected offices provided for in the Constitution. The Committee shall furnish all prospective nominees with a job description and shall nominate to office only those who have agreed to perform the duties of that office. The Committee, or one of its members appointed by it, shall interview each prospective nominee as to qualifications and availability. A seventy-five percent majority vote of the Nominating Committee shall place a name in nomination. The

nominations shall be posted at least four weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall select at least two nominees for each office, if feasible. Names for consideration may be submitted in writing to the Nominating Committee by any voting member of the congregation at least eight weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. Those so submitted will then be considered by the Committee. No nominations shall be made from the floor at the time of the election.

7. Election shall be by secret ballot.
8. In case of elective vacancies that occur during the year, the Nominating Committee will appoint a replacement to finish the year. At the Annual Meeting the congregation will elect a replacement to complete the term of office. The Congregation will vote even if only one candidate is nominated.

Pulpit Committee:

The Pulpit Committee shall consist of the Board of Elders and three members-at-large, appointed by the Elders. This committee shall be activated in the event of a full time pastoral vacancy. When a qualified candidate has been found, the Pulpit Committee shall give two week's notice to the membership of the planned appearance of a candidate before the church. Following the candidate's appearance, the Pulpit Committee shall bring a recommendation regarding the candidate's call and the terms thereof. This recommendation shall be presented at a special business meeting. An eighty-percent majority of voting members present will be required to call a full time Pastor. Only one candidate at a time may be presented for a vote.

Other Committees:

The Elders may appoint other committees as appropriate.

Voting:

Only members in regular attendance who are eighteen years of age or older may vote.

Any member who misses three official business meetings in a row will have voting privileges revoked until reviewed by the elder board for reinstatement. *(Amended 1-07)*

Proxy voting by a spouse will be allowed as long as one spouse is in full attendance at the meeting.

OFFICERS

The officers of the church shall consist of the Elders, the Pastor, the Church Clerk, and the Treasurer.

1. The Chairman of the Elders, selected by the Elders, shall serve as the Chairman of the Church and shall preside over all business meetings. In his absence, the Vice-Chairman of the Elders shall preside.
2. The Church Clerk shall be appointed by the Elders for a term of two years and shall keep accurate and permanent minutes of all business meetings of the church maintain records of baptism and maintain a membership register.
3. The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Elders for a one-year term. The Treasurer may or may not be an Elder, and shall be responsible for the following:

- a) Keeping a clear, accurate, and permanent record of all monies received and disbursements made.
- b) Keeping an accurate accounting of all funds.
- c) Disbursing monies only when authorized by the Elders, and only by check.
- d) Preparing monthly reports for the church and an annual report at the Annual Meeting.
- e) Insuring that the signatures of the Treasurer and an Elder other than the Pastor are on any disbursement check over the amount of \$2,500.

MEMBERSHIP

(changes in this section approved January 22, 2017, Annual Meeting)

(This constitution may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the church by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present)

The membership of GVBC shall be comprised of individuals who are believers by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the tenets of the Church Constitution, and who offer evidence, by their confession and their conduct, that they are living in accord with their affirmations and this Constitution and Bylaws, and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord, Jesus Christ. The Elder Board of GVBC shall have final authority in all matters of church governance, as set forth and described in the Bylaws.

Requirements for Membership

1. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior as indicated by personal testimony.
2. Water baptism.
3. Agreement with the Doctrinal Statement as indicated by signing.
4. Commitment to the Church Covenant as indicated by signing.
5. Agreement with the Constitution as indicated by signing.
6. Minimum of twelve years of age (minimum voting age is eighteen).

EMPLOYMENT

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of GVBC as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to GVBC members and the community, it is imperative that all persons who are considered direct employees of GVBC, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Constitution. (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

USE OF CHURCH FACILITIES

The church's facilities are provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of church members. The church desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Use of GVBC facilities and environs are regulated according to the Church Facility Use Policy. (2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Procedure for Membership:

1. Attendance at a membership class as prepared by the Elders.
2. Interview with at least two Elders.
3. Approval by the Elders.

Termination of Membership:

1. Membership in this church may terminate by any of the following:
 - a. Death
 - b. Transfer
 - c. Written request of the member
 - d. Erasure

Membership Privileges and Other Information:

1. Members eighteen years old or older shall be eligible to vote and are strongly encouraged to take an active role in all decisions and business brought before the church body.
2. Elders, Deacons, and Ministry Leaders must be members.
3. Members and non-members alike may partake of the Lord's Supper if they are believers in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. It will be left up to parents to decide the readiness of their young children to partake. Under no circumstances should an individual who has not personally trusted Christ as Savior partake of the Lord's Supper.

The Board of Elders shall annually review the membership register and shall remove from membership any member who has severed his relationship with the church for a period of one year.

DISCIPLINE AND EXPULSION

1. **Purpose:** The holiness of God requires discipline within the church, having as its aim the glory of God, the welfare, purity and edification of the church, and the repentance and spiritual growth of the offender. (1 Corinthians 5:6-7; Ephesians 4:13; 1 Timothy 5:20; Hebrews 12:11; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2:12)
2. **Authority:** The authority to discipline comes from Scripture, and is administered through the Elders. (Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:11; Galatians 6:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 3:10)
3. **Procedure:** The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the discipline of any member whose life conduct is not consistent with the spiritual walk of the believer as set forth in Scripture. The Board shall proceed with due consideration for the spiritual welfare of both the member and the church. The purpose of discipline shall be the spiritual restoration of the erring member and the purity of the church.

The Board of Elders shall proceed under the guidance of the principles of Matthew

18:15-17. Two members of the Board, chosen by the Board, shall meet with the member to counsel with him concerning the conduct under consideration. If the member does not respond with godly repentance, he shall be asked to meet with the entire Board to discuss the matter. If he remains unrepentant, the Board of Elders, upon the affirmative vote of at least seventy-five percent of its members, shall place such a member under discipline and shall inform the voting members of the church of its action.

A member under discipline shall be deprived of all rights of membership, including any ministry responsibility, and shall be instructed not to partake of the Lord's Supper and not to attend functions of the church other than the worship service.

A member who gives evidence of godly repentance after discipline shall be restored to fellowship by action of the Board of Elders. A report of the restoration shall be made to the membership. A member who remains under discipline without repentance for more than six months shall be expelled by action of the Board of Elders, and the Board shall report such action to the church.

Any person who has been expelled may seek restoration to membership by giving evidence of godly repentance to the Board of Elders and indicating his desire to follow the teaching of Scripture. The Board may restore such person, and any act of restoration shall be reported to the church.

BUSINESS MEETING

1. An Annual Business Meeting shall be held in the month of January at which the annual election for officers shall be held. A written evaluation of the ministries of the church for the preceding year shall be prepared and distributed in advance of the meeting.
2. Other Business Meetings may be called by the Elders, the Pastor, or by written request of at least thirty-five percent of the voting members of the church. A two-week minimum notice shall be required before any Business Meeting. Notice of any special meeting shall be given in the worship service immediately preceding the meeting. A description of the business matters to be considered at any such meeting must be included in the announcement of the meeting. Unless described in the advance notice, other items of business may not be discussed.
3. A quorum of at least thirty-five percent of the voting members shall be required for the transaction of business in any business meeting of the church.
4. Business Meetings, as well as other formal business of the church and its committees shall be conducted by Robert's Rules of Order.

ANNUAL AUDIT

An annual audit shall be performed, either internally or externally.

BUDGET

The budget shall be developed by the elders and presented to the congregation at the annual meeting.

AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the church by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present. Written notice of the proposed amendment must be given or mailed to each voting member at least one month prior to the meeting. Such meeting must be announced at the worship service on the two Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.

DISSOLUTION

In the event that Garden Valley Bible Church is dissolved, assets shall first be used to pay any debts. Any remaining assets shall be given to a like-minded evangelical body and used for the Lord's work. Decisions regarding the disposal of such assets shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders.

CHURCH COVENANT

We have been brought by divine grace to receive the Lord Jesus Christ and to give ourselves up to Him. We have also acknowledged a special obligation to live a new and holy life. And now, relying on the gracious aid of our God and Savior, we sincerely make this covenant with each other:

1. That we will walk together in brotherly love, as is becoming of members of Christ's church, and that we will faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.
2. That we will endeavor, by nurture and admonition of the Lord and by a pure and holy example, to win our family and acquaintances to the Savior and to holy living.
3. That we will rejoice in each other's happiness, and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.
4. That we will not bring forward to the church a complaint against any member for any personal trespass against us until we have taken the steps pointed out by Christ in His instructions to His disciples, and that all private offenses which can be privately settled we will never make public.
5. That we will strive together for the support of a faithful evangelical ministry among us; that according to our abilities and opportunities we will, as faithful servants of the Lord, do good to all men, especially in helping to extend the gospel in its purity and power to the whole human family, and that we will regularly support the work of the church by systematic contributions of our time and money.

1/22/2017