

***The Corporate Bylaws of
GATHERING CHURCH (GC) INC.
A FLORIDA NON-PROFIT CORPORATION***

**Preamble
Statement Of Faith**

THE NATURE OF GOD

God eternally exists as three persons in the The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
Genesis 1:26; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2

SCRIPTURE

Scripture is God's message of truth revealed to man. It is inspired, without error, and the final authority for the life of all men.

2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 2:21

THE PURPOSE OF GOD

Everything has been made by, in, and for God. All things exist to proclaim His glory. His eternal purpose was to display His glory most fully by redeeming mankind in Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 43:7; Psalm 24:10; Ephesians 1:3-11

THE NATURE OF MAN

God uniquely created mankind in His own image. God's image in mankind has been altered as a result of sin.

Genesis 1:26, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-10

SIN

Sin is missing the mark of God's perfect character and will. All mankind has sinned and stands under judgment for their sin.

Romans 3:9-18, 3:23, 6:23

SALVATION

God loves the world and sent Jesus to die on a cross for sin. It was His plan to reconcile men/women back to Himself through Jesus. Salvation is an act of grace by God, and received exclusively through faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

John 3:16; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5

THE NATURE OF JESUS

Jesus is eternal, was born of a virgin, both fully God and fully man, lived a perfect life, died for the sins of mankind, was resurrected on the third day, reigns at the right hand of God in heaven, and will return again to judge both the living and the dead.

John 1:1; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 3:13-22

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead. He convicts of sin, seals at conversion, gifts, guides, and empowers believers to serve in and through the Church.

Acts 1:4,5; John 16:7-15; 1 Corinthians 12

THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

The church universal is God's redeemed people, the Bride and Body of Jesus, and functions to fulfill God's plans. It is made up of all believers, from all nations, throughout all time.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 3:10-12; Rev. 19:6-9

THE CHURCH LOCAL

The church local is an expression of the universal church in a given community. All believers are commanded by God to be a part of a local church for the purpose of fellowship, growth, observance of baptism and communion, and to carry out the great commission.

Acts 2:42-47, 14:23; Revelation 1:4

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH

The Holy Spirit is present in the ministry of the Church and in the exercise of all Biblical gifts of the Spirit according to the instructions given to us in the Bible.

1 Corinthians 12-14; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11

JESUS' SECOND COMING

Jesus will return to the earth to gather his followers and judge the sins of mankind. He will reign on a renewed earth for all eternity.

Matthew 24; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-7, Revelations 19-21

HEAVEN AND HELL

Literal places. Those that profess the salvation and lordship of Christ will spend eternity in heaven with God. Those who deny Christ's salvation and Lordship will spend eternity in hell away from the presence of God.

Luke 16:19-31; Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Corinthians 5:10

BELIEVERS BAPTISM

Baptism is a public, symbolic action that reflects an inward decision. The very act of baptism by immersion is a witness to what happens to the participant when they trust in Christ by faith for salvation. Their sin is buried with Christ, they are cleansed by His atonement for sin and raised to newness of life through God's resurrection power. Baptism does not save a person, but all saved people are commanded by Jesus to be baptized. Baptism should only be administered to individuals who have made a personal decision to follow Christ.

Roman 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12; Matthew 3:13-17, 28:18-20; Acts 22:16

COMMUNION

Jesus instituted two ordinances for the church to observe until he returns, baptism (see above) and communion. The elements of communion are symbolic of the new covenant inaugurated

by the death and resurrection of Jesus. The cup represents the shed blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin. The bread represents the body of Jesus, broken as a payment for the iniquities of mankind. Communion is to be observed as a proclamation of the Lord's death until He returns. The New Testament does not establish the frequency with which communion must be administered.

Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:16-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

ARTICLE I CHURCH NAME

The name of the corporation is Gathering Church (GC).

ARTICLE II CHURCH OFFICE

The principal office for the transaction of the business of the Church is fixed and located at 218 Eglin Parkway, Fort Walton Beach FL 32548. (hereinafter "Church Office"). The Board of Directors (hereinafter "Body of Elders") may at any time, or from time to time, change the location of the Church Office from one location to another in this county.

ARTICLE III BIBLICAL SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS FREE FROM GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION OR REVIEW

Acknowledgement of God's Ultimate Control. This Church, in all of its ministries and activities, exists solely to serve the Lord and bring glory to Him. It is subject to the authority of God's truths as set forth in the Holy Bible and to the guidance from His Spirit as He leads the Church to fulfill the purposes for which this Church was created and for which its members come together as a body and then return to serve Christ in their unique spheres of influence in the world.

Section 1. Bylaws as a Guide.

Acknowledging the spiritual realities of the Church, these bylaws are an informed guide to the Church in its support and service to each of its ministers, employees, leaders and members. The bylaws guide our efforts to fulfill our calling, utilizing our spiritual gifts and maximizing our service to the Lord as He directs and blesses. The bylaws are designed to maximize the impact of the members as a whole, while preserving the agreed liberties of the members. The bylaws protect the biblical rights and freedoms of the Church to take appropriate action in relation to its members, other churches, those who do not know Christ personally, to the society and the government.

Section 2. Spiritual Leadership and Relationships.

The Church pursues its purposes and ministries with the intent to obey God and follow His divine will in all matters. God reveals His will through His Word and by the indwelling Holy Spirit impressing His will upon our members. God wants to reveal His will in all circumstances, so the members covenant to seek His will in all matters. God's ways are above our ways and He often directs His people to do things that do not make sense or are unexplainable in human wisdom, but are clearly the right thing to do according to His will. Church members, gathered together in God's presence, have the authority to resolve all matters at issue before the Church. All members consent to be bound to such decisions as far as it concerns the Church's ministries and as it concerns the members' relationships with this Church.

Section 3. Waiver of Right of Judicial Review.

These bylaws are a spiritually driven guide to direct the spiritual processes of the Church. They are not legalistic controls of the power of God in Church decisions. The bylaws will be followed subject to the prioritized obligation to follow the Lord's will when He provides guidance to act in a certain manner, even if contrary to the express terms of the bylaws. Any failure to comply with the bylaws, when approved by the required percentage of members present and voting, does not create a basis for a review of the Church's decisions by a secular court, including actions contrary to the bylaws. The individual members of the church waive any right to take spiritual matters of Church governance, ministry, ecclesiastical or even secular legal concerns, including ownership, use and control of property, before a secular court of law. All members shall obey God's word by resolving all matters through internal mediation as herein set forth.

Section 4. No Creation of Judicially Enforceable Rights.

These bylaws are not a legally binding contract between the church, its employees or its members. The bylaws do not create rights that are enforceable against the spiritual Church, the corporate Church or its properties, or against any member. If any judge or government officer determines that any provision of the bylaws or another Church governing document creates a legal right or cause of action enforceable in a court or government agency, that provision is stricken from any such document(s) and deemed void and unenforceable. The rest and remainder of the document(s) shall remain valid as spiritual guidelines.

Section 5. Church's Right to Seek Judicial Intervention.

Nothing in these bylaws shall be construed to limit the church's right to pursue any legal action to defend the Church, its members or property, to remove trespassers or former officers, employees or members who have been removed by the vote of the members.

Section 6. Limitation on Activities.

To properly reflect statements required by the United States government, and subject to the full assertion of the Church's rights under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, no substantial part of the activities of this Church shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation (except as otherwise provided by the Internal Revenue Code), and the Church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these bylaws, this Church shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by a church under a proper interpretation of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE IV
CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section 1. Headship of Christ.

The government of the Church is established and headed by Jesus Christ, who is the Senior Pastor of the Church. The Church is first and foremost an ecclesiastical body of believers, the supreme governing document of which is the Bible. The Church is secondarily a civil corporation, the governance of which is established by its Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws. The Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws, however, are subordinate to the Bible and must be interpreted in light of the Scriptures. The Bylaws establish the ecclesiastical bodies that govern the Church. The powers, duties and functions of the body shall be presumed to be ecclesiastical unless explicitly required for civil purposes.

Section 2. Body of Elders.

a. Powers and Duties. The Body of Elders shall govern all ministry, operations, and finances of the Church.

1. Ministry:

(a) The Elders shall oversee and rule the ministry of the Church by precept and example. They shall pray together regularly, seeking the mind of God. They shall meet regularly to review the progress of the execution of the day to day functions. They shall gather to pray and review this progress, informally, as frequently as needed for mutual counsel. The Elder Body will meet a minimum of six times per year and the notes of these meetings are made available to the congregation.

(b) Subject to limitations of state law, the Certificate of Incorporation, and these Bylaws, all powers of the Church and all control over its affairs shall be exercised by or under the authority of the Elders. Without limiting their general powers, the Elders shall have the following powers:

- (i) To appoint and remove all other elders, deacons, officers, agents, and employees of the Church; prescribe such powers and duties for them as may not be inconsistent with state law, the Certificate of Incorporation or these Bylaws; ratify their compensation; and require from them faithful service.
- (ii) To conduct, manage, direct and control the business and affairs of the Church; to make rules and regulations not inconsistent with state law, the Certificate of Incorporation, or these Bylaws.
- (iii) To borrow money and incur indebtedness to promote the Purpose of the Church, and for that Purpose, to execute and deliver, in the name of the

Church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, or other evidence of debt and securities.

- (iv) For Powers and Duties of the Membership see Article V Section 2.

2. Qualifications:

- (a) In addition to the qualifications stated below, and without limiting the application of the whole counsel of God, an elder shall remain qualified to serve as an Elder, as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, so long as he holds the office of elder.
- (b) An Elder shall be a man of high moral character, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, just, devout, self-controlled, not self-willed, and not covetous.
- (c) An Elder shall be a man who rules his home well and whose children follow his example.
- (d) An Elder shall be a man who handles himself uprightly among others; not given to drunkenness, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, but hospitable, a lover of good, and of good reputation in the world.
- (e) An Elder shall be a mature male believer who is able to teach.
- (f) An Elder shall hold to and affirm the Statement of Faith in these Bylaws.
- (g) The elder must be a member of the church and be involved with the church for a time period of at least one year before being nominated as an elder candidate.
- (h) An elder must affirm the core values and vision of the church.
- (i) An elder must complete the prescribed elder training. Elder Training requirements can be obtained by contacting the church office.

b. Number of Elders. The Bible does not define a minimum or maximum number of Elders for a given congregation. The number of Elders will be determined by the needs of the church and the availability of called and equipped leaders meeting the qualifications of an elder. Gathering Church will seek to maintain a minimum of three member elders. If three members meeting elder requirements are not available, see section **2.d**.

c. Election and Term of Office. New Elders shall be nominated and elected by a 2/3 majority vote of the then current Elder body. Elders are elected for a three (3) year term. Each Elder may be elected to successive terms with a 2/3 majority vote of the existing Elder body. If the elder body determines that an elder needs an extended sabbath for a season because of a legitimate need (e.g., illness, tragedy), then that elder can transition to being an inactive and non-voting elder for a set period of time as determined by the elder body.

d. Temporary Non-Member Elder. Until Gathering Church is able to install three elders from within their own membership, a non-member from outside the church may serve as an Elder.

The non-member Elder must have established a prior relationship with Gathering Church, meet the biblical requirements of an elder, and step down from the Elder Body as soon as a suitable third member elder can be installed.

e. Removal. Any elder may be removed from the office of elder for valid cause. Discipline of elders must be consistent with the standards set forth in Matthew 18:15-20 and I Timothy 5:17-19. The elder body will determine specific procedures for removal. These procedures may be altered, amended, repealed or restated by an elder resolution. The elders shall have the sole authority to remove another elder.

A written notice of proposed removal of any elder shall be given to such elder at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to affect such removal is to be taken to ensure that the elder is given a reasonable opportunity to defend himself. The elder shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his removal. Such removal shall take place only upon and after a passing vote [2/3 majority] of the elders at such meeting. The elder under consideration for removal shall not have voting rights.

f. Definition of Lay Elders and Vocational Elders

Lay elders are defined as those elders who are not in the employ of the church as a regular part-time or full-time staff member. Vocational elders are defined as those elders who are in the employ of the church as a regular part-time or full-time staff member. Lay elders shall not receive compensation or salaries for their service. Vocational elders may receive reasonable compensation for fulfilling their vocational responsibilities as employees of the church. A vocational elder shall not vote on nor determine his own personal salary or benefits or designate his personal housing allowance. The elder body will maintain a simple majority of lay elders. If for any reason the simple majority changes, then the elders will begin the vetting process to restore the required composition.

g. Meetings of the Elders.

1. Quorum. A 2/3 majority of the Board of Elders shall be necessary to transact any business at any meeting of the Board of Elders. This 2/3 majority must include the Pastor or his designee if the Pastor cannot be present at the meeting.

2. Voting. The elders of the church shall vote on the matters of (a) appointment of any elder; (b) doctrinal issues; (c) removal of an elder; and (d) other actions deemed major and extraordinary by the elders.

3. Place and Time of Meetings. Regular meetings of the Elders shall be held at the Church Office. Another location may be specified for any meeting if agreed upon by a simple majority of Elders and notice given when required.

- 4. Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Elders may be called at any time and for any purpose by the Pastor or by a majority of the Elders. Each Elder must receive reasonable notice prior to the commencement of a specially called meeting.
- 5. Waiver of Irregularities.** Any meeting of the Elders, however called, noticed or held, shall be deemed valid if, after the meeting, each Elder not present signs a written waiver of notice, a written consent to the meeting, a written approval of the minutes, or a written approval of the Resolution.
- 6. Affirmation by Consent.** Any action required or permitted to be taken by the body of Elders may be taken without a meeting, if every Elder consents in writing to that action. Such action affirmed by written consent shall have the same force and effect as a unanimous vote of the body of Elders occurring in a duly constituted meeting of the body of Elders. Any such written consent shall be kept with the minutes of the body of Elders. Meeting minutes are kept and made available to members of the congregation.

SECTION 3. Officers

a. Officers

Officers of the church shall be members of the elder body. The officers shall consist of a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer and such other officers as deemed necessary by the elders.

b. Election

The officers of the church shall be elected by a passing vote 2/3 majority of the elders, and shall serve terms of at least two (2) years. Officers may be re-elected.

c. Removal of Officers

Any officer may be removed from office for valid cause. A written notice of proposed removal of any officer shall be given to such officer by the secretary or by an elder appointed by the chairman at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to affect such removal is to be taken to ensure that the officer is given a reasonable opportunity for defense. The officer shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his or her accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his or her removal. Removal of an officer requires a passing vote [2/3 majority] of the elders. The officer in question will not have voting rights. Vacancies in the officers of the church by reason of death, resignation or otherwise, shall be filled by election of the elders as soon as is reasonably possible. Until such time, an elder may be appointed by the remaining elders to serve in such vacancy.

d. Duties

1. Chairman

The chairman shall perform such duties as are incumbent on such officer, including making certain that all orders and resolutions of the elders are carried into effect. The chairman shall have oversight of the elder meetings.

The chairman's duties shall include, but not be limited to: establishing meetings, setting the agenda, presiding over the meetings, etc.

2. Vice Chairman

The vice chairman shall, in the absence of a duly appointed chairman, or in the event of the chairman's inability or refusal to act, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the chairman and shall perform other duties as the elders shall from time to time prescribe.

3. Secretary

The secretary shall record or cause to be recorded in a minute book of the church minutes of all meetings of the elders and all votes taken at such meetings. He shall have charge of the official records and seal of the church, and he shall perform such other duties as are incident to the office of secretary and as may be assigned by the elders or the chairman, under whose supervision he shall be.

4. Treasurer

The treasurer shall serve as the overseer of the financial operations of the church. Paid church staff members shall be accountable to the treasurer for the management of the financial aspects of the church. He shall perform such other duties and have other responsibilities as may be assigned to him from time to time by the elders.

Section 4 Deacons

The Deacons of Gathering church are synonymous with our Ministry Team Leaders, but not limited to those positions. The office of Deacon may be an informal designation. Deacons exist to meet service oriented needs within the Body of Christ and are to meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons may be male or female.

Section 5 Staff

Staff are Employees of the church that are hired to perform specific functions. All staff are ultimately under the authority of the Body of Elders. Staff members may serve as Elders or Deacons. All personnel employed by the church shall act in accordance with the current elder approved Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and will not be hired without a documented job description.

**ARTICLE V
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1 Membership

Membership within Gathering Church is first precipitated on one becoming a genuine follower of Jesus Christ through having responded by faith by the drawing of the Spirit to the message of the gospel. In addition, thereto:

- a. Members shall have completed all of the requirements of membership as defined by the elders; and
- b. Members shall have signed the church Membership Covenant, thus committing themselves to the responsibilities therein assigned. *For a copy of the membership requirements and Membership Covenant contact the church office.
- c. Members may also be removed from the Church roll (i) by personal request of the member (except if that member is at the time of the request under church discipline by the Church); (ii) as a result of the transfer of the member's membership to another church; (iii) as an act of church discipline; or (iiii) as a result of the death of the member.

Section 2 Authority of Membership

The Body of Elders serves the membership by assuming predominant responsibility for leadership and decision making within Gathering Church. However, the membership will be asked to exercise authority in the following areas:

- a. The Elders shall take before the membership by vote any expenditure equal to or greater than fifty percent of the current annual budget, such as the purchase or construction of a facility. A 2/3 majority is a passing vote.
- b. The Elders shall take before the membership by vote any changes to these bylaws. A 2/3 majority is a passing vote.
- c. Concerning decisions not included under Section 2a and section 2b the Body of Elders reserves the right to petition the congregation for a vote. The congregational vote instigated at the desire of the Body of Elders is not a binding vote, but a vote of clarification to assist the Elders in discerning the pulse of the congregation.

Section 3 Corrective Discipline in the Church

The Body of Elders of this organization shall have the authority to correct and discipline those who members of Gathering Church. The fourfold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church, to edify and protect believers by deterring sin, to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct, and to guard the integrity of the local church in the eyes of non-believers whom we are witnesses to. Church Discipline will be carried out in line with the Bible; Galatians 6:1, 1 Timothy 5:19-20, and Matthew 18:15-17.

- a. Members of the Church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with the Church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that

violates Scripture as determined by any two or more elders, shall be subject to church discipline. Each potential case of discipline will be weighed on its own merits and dealt with according to Scripture.

- b.** Members of the 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 endangerment to others exists, as well as other violations of Scripture that may not result in physical danger.
- c.** Those who are members of the Church or who regularly participate in Church activities may be dismissed from the Church by the agreement of a 2/3 majority of elders. The dismissal of a Church member may be made known to all Church members.
- d.** A person dismissed from the Church for disciplinary reasons may be reinstated to full membership if the person's repentance is accepted as genuine by the elder that oversaw the person's discipline.
- e.** Each member of the Church and every other professing Christian who regularly attends or fellowships with the Church agrees that there shall be no appeal to any court because of a discipline process or dismissal. A member who is under discipline by the Church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeits and waives the right to resign from the Church. Resignation is possible only by a member of the Church who is in good standing and who is not under any disciplinary action.
- f.** Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of a 2/3 majority of elders, a member, non-member regular participant in Church activities, or other individual, may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon Church premises or at Church activities for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.
- g.** Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of a 2/3 majority of elders, members who have not met all of the criteria of Church membership for a period of six months or longer may be removed as a member of the Church and may be asked to no longer attend the Church.
 - h.** Members may also be removed from the Church roll (i) by personal request of the member (except if that member is at the time of the request under church discipline by the Church); (ii) as a result of the transfer of the member's

membership to another church; or (iii) as a result of the death of the member.

ARTICLE VI

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE & FAMILIES

Section 1 Church Subject to Biblical Authority on Marriages

Gathering Church follows the living, holy and God inspired Bible as God's instruction manual for all followers of Jesus Christ, including all leaders and members at Gathering Church. The Bible is the authority under which we make all ministry operating decisions and all church conduct and policies must be consistent with Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Our church, its ministers and its properties exist only to serve and be used for biblical principles and shall not be used for ungodly, unbiblical purposes such as performing non-Christian marriages, even if under government duress.

Section 2 Biblical Teaching on Marriage

The Book of Genesis shows that the Christian concept of marriage is based on God's revelation of the origin of human life on earth where God declares that His creation was "very good" after He had declared that it was not good for man to be alone and He created Eve to make them complete as a husband and wife, man and woman.

Section 3 Church's Acceptance of God's Word over Man's Anti-Biblical Laws

Gathering Church accepts this Biblical covenant of marriage as it has existed from the first man forward and that precedes any governmental laws regulating the marriage unit that God created. The Biblical concept is that marriage is an emotional, physical, and spiritual union between one man and one woman who become one flesh together when they join as husband and wife. In Mark 10:2- 9, Jesus clearly states that God's plan and view of marriage involves only the union of a man and woman in matrimony that is holy and acceptable to God. Obedience to the Word of God in the areas of sexual behavior leads to stable and productive family life.

The husband and wife marriage relationship reflects the church's relationship with God. In Ephesians 5, husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loves the church, to be willing to die for them and wives are called to respect their husbands as the head of the family, just as Christ's body, His Church, is called to respect Christ as head of the church in all regards. Gathering Church respects Christ as the Head of the Church and will follow only His teachings on marriage regardless of what any secular government might otherwise attempt to command.

Section 4 Rejection of Contrary "Marriages"

Based on the revealed truths and the perfect love of God behind them, Gathering Church accepts the biblical definition of marriage as a covenant relationship between one man with one woman in the presence and love and blessings of God and excluding all others. No other

relationship is acceptable as a marriage in God's sight. This church will not allow, recognize, participate in or support any other concept or definition of marriage. Any relationship between two men or two women in any claimed marriage, domestic partnership, domestic unit or other relationship proclaimed equivalent to a marriage is contrary to God's Word, and will not be recognized by the Gathering Church and will be grounds for dismissal from Church membership.

Section 5 Policies For Staff and Properties

For these reasons, and given the plate of honor and holiness that marriage is given in the Bible, Gathering Church adopts the following policies:

- a) **Elders & Staff.** Gathering Church shall not appoint an elder or hire a ministerial staff member who does not verify that they personally affirm the truths set forth herein and agree to comply with the same. Any elder or ministerial staff of Gathering Church who performs a same sex wedding ceremony shall be promptly removed consistent with these bylaws for immoral conduct celebrating a decision to live contrary to God's revealed truth.
- b) **Preventing Other Ministers From Conducting Ceremonies.** No minister other than those in a direct ministerial employment relationship with Gathering Church or pastors or ministers who Gathering Church, in its sole discretion, believes that they personally agree with and accept the truths behind these marriage policies, shall be allowed to conduct or participate in wedding ceremonies on our premises.
- c) **Prohibiting Properties From Such Use.** No marriage ceremony will be conducted at Gathering Church unless *it* involves a Christian marriage between a man and a woman as set forth herein. No event will be allowed on church property that proclaims or endorses the acceptability of any alleged marital relationship contrary to the biblical truths set forth herein.
- d) **Wedding Applicants.** All persons desiring to be married at Gathering Church or by a member of our elder body or ministerial staff shall be required to complete pre-marital counseling with one of our staff members or another minister or elder acceptable to Gathering Church in its sole discretion. No marriage or other ceremony shall be performed for any couple who are not qualified in accordance with our policies on marriage. The member of our elder body or ministerial staff conducting the pre-marital counseling has discretionary authority to recommend to the Elder Body that in his judgment the couple is not ready for or should not be married at Gathering Church or by any of our elders or ministerial staff members. The Elder Body shall decide, in their discretion but in conformity with these bylaws, whether or not the church will allow the marriage to be held at the church or to be performed by an elder or ministerial staff member and will so advise the couple.
- e) **Right to Deny Applicants.** The church reserves the right to refuse to allow the use of church property or facilities to perform any wedding ceremony or other event that, in its sole discretion, is inconsistent with the church's statement of faith and contrary to Biblical standards for marriage and with this marriage policy.

**ARTICLE VII
CHURCH AUXILIARIES**

Any organization, group or club whose membership is primarily for a Church activity, shall be considered an auxiliary of this Church and shall be subject to these Bylaws. An auxiliary organization shall exist only in cooperation with the Body of Elders.

**ARTICLE VIII
AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

These Bylaws may be amended or replaced with new Bylaws if approved or adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Body of Elders.

**ARTICLE IX
ANNUAL ACCOUNTING PERIOD**

The annual accounting period for this Church shall begin on the first day of January, and shall end on the last day of December.

**ARTICLE X
MISCELLANEOUS**

Section 1. Execution of Documents.

The Elders may enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church. The Elders may authorize by a 2/3 majority vote any other officer or agent to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church and such authority may be general or confined to a specific instance. No other person shall have any power or authority enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church.

Section 2. Inspection of Bylaws.

The Church shall keep in the Church Office the original or a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation and these Bylaws, as amended to date, certified by the Secretary, which shall be open to inspection by members of the Church at all reasonable times during normal business hours.

Section 3. Construction and Definitions.

Unless the Word of God, or the context, requires otherwise, the general provisions, rules of construction, and definitions contained in the Florida State General Non-Profit Corporation law shall govern the interpretation of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE XI
CHURCH ORDINATION

Section 1. Nature and Purpose.

- a. Nature of Ordination. A candidate for ordination recognizes that only our Sovereign, Holy God can truly call and ordain His children for service in the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The calling of a minister is not the result of a title; rather the title is a result of His calling. This calling is from the true and living God. It is man's privilege and specifically the privilege of the overseers of the true church of Jesus Christ to ratify God's ordination when such is obviously placed upon a man's life.
- b. Purpose of Article. The purpose of this Article is to provide for the ordination of ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by and through this Church.

Section 2. Qualifications and Procedure.

- a. The qualifications for ordination by this Church are as follows:
 - 1. A candidate for ordination shall be a "born again" believer in Jesus Christ as described by our Lord in the third chapter of the Gospel of John.
 - 2. A candidate for ordination shall satisfy all of the qualifications of an Elder as described in these Bylaws.
 - 3. A candidate for ordination shall have evidenced the obvious calling of God upon his life to the satisfaction of the Body of Elders.
- b. The procedure for ordination by this Church shall be as follows:
 - 1. Each candidate fulfilling the qualifications for ordination, and upon their presentation to the Body of Elders, shall receive prayerful consideration for ordination into the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by this Church.
 - 2. Upon two-thirds (2/3) approval of the Body of Elders, the candidate shall be ordained as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with the right to perform ministerial functions in accordance with the laws of the land and the ordinances of the Word of God, and with all prerogatives of such a calling and office.
 - 3. All candidates, successful or otherwise, shall be notified of the decision of the Body of Elders in writing within one (1) week of the final action.

Section 3. Certificate of Ordination.

The following text shall be inscribed on a suitable Certificate of Ordination issued to each successful ordination candidate:

CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION

This is to certify that Pastor _____ was duly ordained by Gathering Church as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He has completed all studies and has met all of the qualifications necessary for recognition of such office; further, by rite of ordination this date, he is duly ordained to perform all ministerial functions without limit as accorded by the laws of the land and in compliance with the ordinances of God's Holy Church as set forth in the Holy Bible. We now pray for God's divine Blessing and the power of the Holy Spirit upon him. Amen.

Given this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Gathering Church (GC) Fort Walton Beach, FL

Pastor Secretary

With headquarters in Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

ARTICLE XII CHURCH LICENSING

Section 1. Nature and Purpose.

- a. Nature of Licensing. In order to evaluate the ministry of potential ordination candidates, this Church has a licensing process. This process allows a candidate's ministry to be evaluated by the Body of Elders to help avoid the problem with laying hands "suddenly" on an individual (1 Timothy 5:22). A candidate for licensing should first serve as a staff member of the Church or fulfill a specific ministry leadership role within the Church.
- b. Purpose of Article. The purpose of this Article is to provide for the licensing of ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ within this Church.

Section 2. Qualifications and Procedure.

- a. The qualifications for licensing by this Church are as follows:
 - 1. A candidate for licensing shall be a “born again” believer in Jesus Christ as described by our Lord in the third chapter of the Gospel of John.
 - 2. A candidate for licensing shall hold to and affirm the Gathering Churches Statement of Faith, Core Values, and Church Leadership.

- b. The procedure for licensing by this Church shall be as follows:
 - 1. Each candidate fulfilling the qualifications for licensing, and upon their presentation to the Body of Elders, shall receive prayerful consideration for licensing within the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by this Church.
 - 2. Upon two-thirds (2/3) approval of the Body of Elders, the candidate shall be licensed as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with the right to perform ministerial functions in accordance with the laws of the land and the ordinances of the Word of God, and with all prerogatives of such a calling and office.
 - 3. All candidates, successful or otherwise, shall be notified of the decision of the Board of Elders in writing within one (1) week of the final action.

Section 4. Certificate of Licensing.

The following text shall be inscribed on a suitable Certificate of Licensing issued to each successful ordination candidate:

CERTIFICATE OF LICENSING

This is to certify that Pastor _____ was duly licensed by Gathering Church as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He has completed all studies and has met all of the qualifications necessary for recognition of such office. By rite of licensing, he is duly licensed to perform all ministerial functions for two years from this date as accorded by the laws of the land and in compliance with the ordinances of God's Holy Church as set forth in the Holy Bible. We now pray for God's divine blessing and the power of the Holy Spirit upon him. Amen.

Given this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Gathering Church (GC), Fort Walton Beach, Fl

Pastor Secretary

With headquarters in Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

Signed

Pastor Ryan Burgess, President

Charlie Minter, Elder

Christopher Martin, Deacon