# City Gates Church Constitution

Byron Center, Michigan
Adopted on March 30, 2025

## PREFACE

There are many good reasons why a New Testament church should have Articles of Faith, a Covenant, and a Constitution. Together they can greatly assist us in the efforts of biblically organizing and conducting the ministries that have been entrusted to us by our Head, Jesus Christ. It must be readily acknowledged, however, that these documents, despite their usefulness and precision, will avail nothing apart from the presence and power of the Spirit of God in a church. It is with this keen awareness of our absolute dependence upon our great God that these articles are set forth.

## PREAMBLE

City Gates Church is comprised of followers of Jesus Christ who have united under His Lordship in covenant commitment to one another and to our God. We joyfully and wholeheartedly submit to His authority as it is revealed to us in His holy, inerrant, and infallible written Word.

Having carefully examined the Scriptures regarding the nature and purpose of the church, and the principles whereby it is to be governed, we, the members of City Gates Church set forth the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

## ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this church shall be “City Gates Church.”

## ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to glorify the God of the Scriptures in promoting His worship, evangelizing sinners, and edifying saints. To this end we are committed to proclaiming God’s perfect Law and His glorious Gospel of Grace in Jesus Christ throughout the world, and to contending for the “faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

## ARTICLE III - ARTICLES OF FAITH

The Articles of Faith—that is, New Hampshire Confession (1853), Church Constitution, and Church Covenant—are accepted by its present members and shall be subscribed to and accepted voluntarily by new members as they offer themselves for membership.

We do hereby adopt as the fullest expression of our faith the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689). We believe that this historic document is an excellent summary of the fundamental truths of God’s Word. We accept it, not as an authoritative rule or code of faith, but as an aid to us in controversy, a confirmation of what we believe, and a means of growing together in grace, while affirming individual liberty of conscience in non-essential matters.

We do hereby affirm the “Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood” (1987).

## ARTICLE IV - CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Jesus Christ is Lord and Head of this church. His will as expressed in the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, is the sole authority in matters of faith and practice. City Gates Church is a congregational church led by elders. We recognize that the authority of Christ is vested in the whole congregation (Galatians 1:8–10; Matthew 18:15–20) and that Christ has prescribed that local congregations be led by godly men who have been duly appointed to lead and oversee the church (Titus 1:5–11; 1 Timothy 1:4–5). The elders carefully give spiritual direction to the church for the joy of each member (2 Corinthians 1:24) and the members submissively follow the leadership of and obey the elders so that the elders may do their work with joy (Hebrews 13:17).

Deacons serve the church in various capacities at the direction of the elders, focusing predominately on the physical needs of the church (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

The church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body, but is associated with churches of like faith for purposes of fellowship, consultation, and cooperation. Such voluntary associations shall not infringe upon the autonomy of this church. When it is deemed desirable to pursue fellowship with local churches of like faith and order, this church may join an association of churches upon the recommendation of the elders and a vote of the congregation. Withdrawal from such associations may be effected by the same process.

## ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Requirements for Membership

To be considered for membership in this church, a person must be a disciple of Jesus Christ and give biblical evidence of regeneration. Such a disciple must be baptized in obedience to Christ, and commit wholeheartedly to follow Jesus Christ as Lord in accordance with Scripture. Each prospective member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the New Hampshire Confession (1853) 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, character of life, and such other evidence, as they deem appropriate.

Section 2: Membership Process

Any believer seeking membership at City Gates Church should:

1. Communicate their desire to the elders.

2. Receive and work through a membership packet.

3. Submit the completed forms.

4. Meet with one or more elders for a membership interview to include a discussion as to the candidate’s basic Christian experience, doctrinal beliefs, and seriousness of intention to support wholeheartedly the total ministry of this church, and to live for Christ in accordance with our church covenant.

5. Attend membership class(es) as provided by the elders.

The candidate may be received into membership upon recommendation by the elders and affirmation by at least two-thirds of the members present at a members meeting.

Once a candidate is received into membership, he or she relinquishes their membership in other churches. New members are formally welcomed into the church at the next Lord's Supper Service. They are also encouraged and given the opportunity to share their testimony with the church family.

Section 3: Forms of Membership

A. REGULAR — All who are received into the membership of the church on the above-mentioned conditions shall be considered members in good standing until such status is changed by one of the conditions set forth in Article V, Section 4.

B. SPECIAL CARE — The membership status of individuals such as those with chronic illness or disability, homebound members, Christian workers (such as missionaries, ministry staff, or seminary students), and others whose relationship to the church involves special circumstances shall be considered by the elders on a case-by-case basis. The elders will then make appropriate recommendations to the church regarding their care, oversight, and continued membership status.

Section 4: Termination of Membership

A member may be removed from the membership of City Gates Church by:

A. DISMISSAL — At the recommendation of the elders and the approval of the congregation, letters of dismissal shall be granted to members who apply for them in writing, provided they are in good standing and not subject to or already under corrective discipline at the time of the application. When such letters have been granted, the relationship to this church shall be considered terminated.

B. EXCLUSION — If a member is habitually absent from the stated meetings of this church without just cause, or is unwilling to resolve conflicts or settle differences in a Scriptural manner, or requests severance of membership, he or she may be excluded from the membership at the discretion of the elders, subject to the approval of the congregation.

C. TRANSFER — Letters of recommendation shall be granted upon the recommendation of the elders and approval by the congregation to evangelical churches that request them, provided the member in question is in good standing and not subject to or already under discipline at the time of the application. When such letters have been granted, the relationship to this church shall be considered terminated. Letters of dismissal shall be forwarded and given only to other evangelical churches (Philemon 2).

D. EXCOMMUNICATION — It is right and in harmony with the Scriptures for the congregation, upon recommendation of the elders, to remove from this fellowship any person who persists in holding false or heretical doctrine; or who obviously and persistently lives inconsistently with his profession; or who lives in violation of the law or public morals that bring public reproach upon Christ and the church not only by breaking God's law but also by violating generally understood, visible standards of right and wrong in the broader community; or who walks disorderly; or who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of this church (Matthew 10:15ff; 1 Corinthians 5:1ff; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,11,15; Romans 16:17).

E. DEATH