

Constitution of Desiring God Community Church

Adopted by the Congregation, July 9, 2003; amended July 31, 2005

Preamble

Since it pleased God to call together a community of believers to give glory to His Name through the establishment of a *God-centered, Christ-exalting, Bible-saturated, prayer-powered, diversity-loving, missions-mobilizing, family-strengthening, disciple-producing, joy-pursuing church* in northeast Charlotte, we the members of Desiring God Community Church do hereby adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Statement of Faith Governing Teaching and the Covenant of this church.

Article 1 – Name

The name of this church is Desiring God Community Church.

Article 2 – Purpose

This church exists by the grace of God to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples. Thus, the glory of God is the ultimate purpose of all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him, delighting in Him, and obeying His commands through:

- Worshipping Him;
- Equipping the saints through Bible instruction, study, and discipleship;
- Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture;
- Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work: local, domestic, and international;
- Administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper;
- Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers;
- Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ; and
- Calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement about the nature of the local church.

Article 3 – Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized in obedience to Christ following his or her

1 regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible.
2 Each member must agree to the Statement of Faith for Members without reservation, must be
3 familiar with the Statement of Faith Governing Teaching, and must promise to keep the
4 commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining
5 each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a
6 person's profession of faith, or such other evidence as the elders deem appropriate.

7 Exception: Candidates for membership who meet all requirements other than baptism
8 subsequent to regeneration may be admitted into membership provided they meet these
9 three conditions: a) they were baptized prior to regeneration by a church that does not
10 hold to baptismal regeneration; b) upon presenting themselves for membership, they
11 study seriously and prayerfully the biblical support for our view of baptism; and c) after
12 that study they cannot yet in good conscience submit to baptism because they continue to
13 believe that their infant baptism was biblical and sufficient.

14 *Section 2 – Admission of Members*

15 To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for
16 admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the
17 members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches. The elders will
18 inform the congregation of the names of those they intend to recommend for membership at least
19 one week prior to the vote.

20 *Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership*

21 In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged
22 and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent
23 with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.
24 Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this
25 congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders.
26 Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and
27 professional consultation.

28 Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and
29 responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers,
30 on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a
31 vote.

32 *Section 4 – Associate Membership*

33 Students and others temporarily residing in the Charlotte area who are members of an
34 evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Those who are in full-time ministry that
35 requires them to maintain membership at another church may also apply for associate
36 membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except
37 that home church membership is retained. Generally, a letter of commendation will be sought
38 from the applicant's home church. Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as
39 for other members except that:

40 (a) when absent from the Charlotte area for extended periods of time they are released from
41 the responsibility to attend our church services;

1 (b) while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings they will not be
2 eligible to stand for any office or to vote.

3 Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other
4 members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church of that
5 termination. Associate membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the
6 period of temporary residence in the Charlotte area.

7 *Section 5 – On Church Discipline*

8 Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name
9 of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be
10 subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the
11 instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline,
12 then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

13 Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from
14 communion and voting privileges for a definite period, deposition from office, and
15 excommunication (see Matthew 18:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19–20; 1
16 Corinthians 5:4–5).

17 The purpose of such discipline should be:

- 18 • For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see
19 Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 15:5; 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; 29:15; Ecclesiastes 7:5;
20 Matthew 7:26–27; 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 4:14; 5:5; Galatians
21 6:1–5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15; 1 Timothy 1:20; 3:4–5; Titus 1:13–14; Hebrews
22 12:1–11; James 1:22);
- 23 • For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them
24 (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1
25 Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; 1
26 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24–25);
- 27 • For the purity of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 5:6–7; 2 Corinthians 13:10;
28 Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2);
- 29 • For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew
30 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1–14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John
31 3:10); and
- 32 • Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11;
33 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20;
34 Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; Romans 2:24; 15:5–6; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Ephesians 1:4;
35 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12).

36 *Section 6 – Termination of Membership*

37 Termination of membership shall be recognized by the church following the death or voluntary
38 resignation of any church member. Membership may be terminated as an act of church discipline
39 at the recommendation of the elders and with the vote of two-thirds of the members at any
40 regular or special meeting of the members. Should a member resign against whom disciplinary
41 procedures are pending, the church may decide to continue with these procedures prior to

1 accepting the resignation, if this will bring the greatest glory to God and good to the erring
2 member.

3 **Article 4 - Meetings**

4 *Section 1 – Worship Meetings*

5 Worship services shall be held the first day of every week, and may be held throughout the week
6 as the church determines.

7 *Section 2 – Members’ meetings*

8 In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving
9 consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

10 There shall be a regular members’ meeting at least every third month, at some time apart from a
11 public worship service agreed upon by the membership.

12 An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members’ meetings of the
13 church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that
14 required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

15 Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be fulfilled
16 by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by
17 members present.

18 A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members’ meeting no more than three
19 months nor less than two weeks prior to the start of the fiscal year.

20 At any regular or special members’ meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as
21 needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

22 Special members’ meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request,
23 submitted to the elders, of ten percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of
24 any special meeting shall be provided to the congregation at all public services of the church
25 within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the
26 elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

27 **Article 5 – Officers**

28 *Section 1 – Summary*

29 The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the
30 administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer. All officers must be
31 members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

32 *Section 2 – Elders*

33 The elders shall be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set
34 forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. In addition, all elders must agree wholeheartedly with
35 the Statement of Faith Governing Teaching in all its particulars. By September, 2006 and at all
36 times thereafter, the church intends for a majority of the active eldership to be members not in
37 the regular pay of the church, and will work diligently to see that this is the case. No elder shall
38 hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

1 Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the
2 church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6 and 1 Peter 5:1– 6, the elders shall
3 devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound
4 doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.

5 The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the
6 constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His
7 church and set apart as elders for a three-year term.

8 After an elder, other than the senior or associate pastor(s), has served two consecutive three-year
9 terms, he may only be elected to the active eldership after at least one year. Exception: In
10 unusual circumstances, the elders may ask the congregation to allow an elder to serve no more
11 than one additional one-year term.

12 An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members
13 with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the
14 elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the
15 instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and 1 Timothy 5:17–21. Any of the elders may be
16 dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members’ meeting of the church, provided
17 that the elders have been informed in writing of the motion for dismissal at least two weeks prior
18 to the members’ meeting.

19 The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members,
20 examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of
21 the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer
22 the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry,
23 encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of
24 church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church
25 for world missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the
26 congregation, including outside speakers, and all songs sung in our services, share and reflect our
27 fundamental convictions.

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

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

36 The elders shall elect a chairman of elders’ meetings and shall also elect one of their number to
37 serve as moderator of members’ meetings. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit
38 corporation laws of the North Carolina, the chairman of the elders’ meetings shall serve as the
39 president of the corporation.

40 *Section 3 – The Senior Pastor*

41 The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2,
42 above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time
43 ministry of preaching and teaching.

1 His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in
2 Article 5, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 3.

3 He shall preach, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and perform such
4 other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution.

5 In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his
6 duties, any of which can be delegated.

7 *Section 4 – Associate Pastors*

8 The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of
9 associate.

10 An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section
11 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time
12 ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or
13 to the term limitation set out in Article 5, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per
14 Article 6, Section 4.

15 He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any
16 other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which
17 may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation.

18 In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or
19 illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight
20 of the elders.

21 *Section 5 – Assistant Pastors*

22 The church may call additional pastors, from within the congregation only, whose relationship to
23 the senior pastor is that of assistant.

24 An assistant pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section
25 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time
26 ministry of preaching and teaching.

27 His call shall be subject to the triennial reaffirmation and term limitation set out in Article 5,
28 section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 5.

29 He shall assist the senior pastor and associate pastor(s) in the performance of their regular duties,
30 and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor. The elders shall
31 define the responsibilities of the assistant pastor(s).

32 *Section 6 – Pastoral Assistants*

33 The senior pastor may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as pastoral
34 assistants. These need not be elders, though they may be if elected in accordance with Article 5,
35 Section 2. Prior to being hired, a potential pastoral assistant must sign the Statement of Faith
36 Governing Teaching, noting any exceptions. The senior pastor, with the advice of the elders, will
37 decide whether or not the exceptions are serious enough to disqualify the candidate from the
38 position.

1 The senior pastor shall assign the responsibilities of the pastoral assistant(s). They shall serve at
2 the will of the senior pastor for a term of one year, though that term may be extended with the
3 approval of the elders.

4 *Section 7 – Deacons & Deaconesses*

5 The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7. The church shall
6 recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men and women who
7 are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service.
8 These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and
9 deaconesses. They shall be elected to a one, two, or three-year term. They may be reelected until
10 they have served for three consecutive years. At that point, they may only be elected to another
11 term after one year. Exception: In unusual circumstances, the elders may ask the congregation to
12 allow a deacon to serve no more than one additional one-year term.

13 Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the
14 accommodations for public worship, encourage and support those able to help others and those
15 with gifts of administration, work for the unity of the body, and support the elders.

16 Each year the deacons and deaconesses, with the approval of the elders, shall present to the
17 church an itemized budget at least three weeks prior to the members meeting where it will be
18 voted upon. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries
19 without the approval of the elders and deacons.

20 The deacons and deaconesses shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting
21 on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total
22 disbursements only.

23 The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid
24 administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their
25 responsibilities in the church.

26 *Section 8 – Clerk*

27 It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members’
28 meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as
29 requested by the pastor, the elders, the deacons, or the church.

30 The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a renewable
31 term of one year.

32 In the absence or incapacity of the clerk the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties
33 of the church clerk.

34 For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the North Carolina, the clerk
35 shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

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

38 *Section 9 – Treasurer*

39 The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, deacon, or paid church staff member, shall ensure
40 that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in banks, financial institutions, or

1 depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports
2 of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. The
3 responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also ensure
4 that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the
5 church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the
6 church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer
7 shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions
8 as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

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

11 **Article 6 – Elections**

12 *Section 1 – Principles*

13 The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following
14 principles:

- 15 • Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the
16 election process;
- 17 • Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;
- 18 • All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty
19 appropriate in evaluating fellow members;
- 20 • The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving
21 consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 *Section 2 – Selection of Officers*

23 The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees
24 to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, or treasurer shall be presented by the elders to the congregation
25 at least one month prior to the election meeting.

26 The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the
27 nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is
28 unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak
29 in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as
30 possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

31 The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a 3/4 majority of all votes cast for the
32 office of elder. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a
33 simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

34 The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has
35 been specifically designated.

36 *Section 3 – Calling of the Senior Pastor*

37 In the calling of any man to this position, the same procedure for calling an elder must be
38 followed, except that:

- 1 • Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as senior
2 pastor must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to
3 the vote at a members' meeting.
- 4 • If the nominee is married, his wife must be elected into membership at the same meeting.
- 5 • The church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any
6 potential senior pastor.
- 7 • Before being asked to express its judgment on the nominee, the church must receive
8 assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no
9 doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith Governing the Teaching of
10 the Church and Church Covenant.

11 *Section 4 – Calling of Associate Pastor*

12 In the calling of any man to this position, the same procedure for calling a senior pastor must be
13 followed.

14 *Section 5 – Calling of Assistant Pastor*

15 The calling of any man to the position of assistant pastor requires that that man have been
16 recognized and called by the congregation to the office of elder, according to the process
17 described in Article 6, Section 2. Such a man may then be called by the elders to serve as
18 assistant pastor with defined duties for a fixed period of time specified by the elders in the terms
19 of his call.

20 **Article 7 – Indemnification**

21 *Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification*

22 If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an
23 officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against
24 liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person
25 acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would
26 exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in
27 the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her
28 conduct was unlawful.

29 *Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification*

30 At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good
31 faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not
32 unlawful.

33 *Section 3 – Procedure*

34 If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the
35 number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the
36 membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

1 **Article 8 – Dispute Resolution**

2 Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve
3 disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, for example, Matthew
4 18:15–20, 1 Corinthians 6:1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among
5 themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts.

6 Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based
7 principles and the avoidance of suits of law or equity to resolve disputes between itself and those
8 outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities. The
9 elders shall adopt policies and procedures to effect these requirements and aspirations.

10 **Article 9 – Amendments**

11 Any amendment to the Statement of Faith Governing the Teaching of the Church, the Statement
12 of Faith for Members, or the Church Covenant must be proposed by the elders. At least three-
13 quarters of the elders must support the change. To be adopted, the amendment must gain
14 approval of three-quarters of the members present and voting at a members’ meeting, provided
15 the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members’ meeting, and shall
16 have been provided to the congregation at two successive Sunday meetings prior to such vote.

17 This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a
18 members’ meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous
19 members’ meeting, and shall have been provided to the congregation at two successive Sunday
20 meetings prior to such vote.

21 The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the
22 church clerk.