

# Constitution of Desiring God Community Church

Adopted by the Congregation, July 9, 2003; amended July 31, 2005 and August 7, 2016

## 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. No elder shall hold the office of  
36 deacon during his tenure.

37 Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the  
38 church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6 and 1 Peter 5:1–6, the elders shall

1 devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound  
2 doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.

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

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

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

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

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

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

34 *Section 3 – The Senior Pastor*

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

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

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

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

3 *Section 4 – Associate Pastors*

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

6 An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section  
7 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time  
8 ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or  
9 to the term limitation set out in Article 5, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per  
10 Article 6, Section 4.

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

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

17 *Section 5 – Assistant Pastors*

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

20 An assistant pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section  
21 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time  
22 ministry of preaching and teaching.

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

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

28 *Section 6 – Pastoral Assistants*

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

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

38 *Section 7 – Deacons & Deaconesses*

39 The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7. The church shall  
40 recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men and women who

1 are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service.  
2 These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and  
3 deaconesses. They shall be elected to a one, two, or three-year term. They may be reelected.

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

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

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

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

#### 17 *Section 8 – Clerk*

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

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

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

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

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

#### 29 *Section 9 – Treasurer*

30 The church recognizes the Treasurer as a deacon serving and unifying the church through  
31 financial oversight. The treasurer shall not be an active elder or paid church staff member. He or  
32 she shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in banks,  
33 financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for  
34 presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each  
35 members' meeting. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The  
36 treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept  
37 in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that  
38 all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of  
39 the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an  
40 account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

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

### 3 **Article 6 – Elections**

#### 4 *Section 1 – Principles*

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

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

#### 14 *Section 2 – Selection of Officers*

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

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

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

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

#### 28 *Section 3 – Calling of the Senior Pastor*

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

- 31 • Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as senior  
32 pastor must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to  
33 the vote at a members’ meeting.
- 34 • If the nominee is married, his wife must be elected into membership at the same meeting.
- 35 • The church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any  
36 potential senior pastor.



- 1       • Before being asked to express its judgment on the nominee, the church must receive  
2 assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no  
3 doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith Governing the Teaching of  
4 the Church and Church Covenant.

5 *Section 4 – Calling of Associate Pastor*

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

8 *Section 5 – Calling of Assistant Pastor*

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

14 **Article 7 – Indemnification**

15 *Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification*

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

23 *Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification*

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

27 *Section 3 – Procedure*

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

31 **Article 8 – Dispute Resolution**

32 Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve  
33 disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, for example, Matthew  
34 18:15–20, 1 Corinthians 6:1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among  
35 themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts.

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

1 **Article 9 – Amendments**

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

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

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