

Constitution Of
Faith Community Church Of Gambrills, Inc.
1306 Riedel Road
Gambrills, Maryland 21054

Ratified and Adopted
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Article I - Name

This church shall be known as the Faith Community Church of Gambrills, Inc., Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

Article II - Purpose

The purpose of Faith Community Church is to introduce people to Jesus Christ and equip them to become His devoted followers.

At Faith Community we will always make room for those who are non-believers, new believers, hurting believers, or active disciples.

Our Vision - The vision of the church is like the arrows we use to shoot at the target. This is how we accomplish our purpose.

God expects our church to be based on the sufficiency of scripture. We believe that in the Bible, God has given to all individuals all they need to handle life in a manner that pleases Him. (See Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-9) Using the Bible we seek to be...

*God Glorifying
Christ - Centered
Spirit - Empowered
Committed To Discipleship
Culturally Relevant*

This Demands A...

*Lifestyle Of Worship
Commitment To Fellowship
Dedication To Service
Practical Application Of The Bible
Loving Outreach*

Article III - Status

This organization shall remain nondenominational; shall be independent in nature; and cannot become affiliated with any other organization except by vote of three fourths (3/4) of the voting church membership. This restriction shall not interfere with fellowship with similar groups which are not in conflict with the Articles of Faith of Faith Community Church.

Article IV - Articles Of Faith

A. *The Holy Scriptures.* The Bible in its original documents is the inspired Word of God, the written record of

His supernatural revelation of Himself to man, absolute in its authority, complete in its revelation, final in its content, and without error in its statements. Psalms 89:34; Matthew 24:35; II Timothy 3:16; I Peter 1:24,25; II Peter 1:20,21.

B. *The Godhead.* There is one God who is eternally existent, creator of the heaven and earth, manifested in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; co-existent in power and glory and executing distinct yet harmonious duties in the work of redemption. Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:22,23; John 14:9; Acts 5:3,4; II Corinthians 13:14; I Timothy 3:16; I John 5:7; Genesis 1:2.

C. *The Person and Work of the Father.* God the Father is sovereign ruler over everything, and He becomes the believer's Father at the new birth. God the Father so loved His creation that He gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, to become our only means of salvation. Other works of the Father include the sending of the Holy Spirit to indwell the believer forever at salvation, and answering prayer. Galatians 4:4-7; John 3:16; John 14:16; John 16:23,24; Revelation 19:6.

D. *The Person and Work of Christ.* The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God who became flesh and lived on earth. He was virgin born, sinlessly perfect, and gave Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice by dying and shedding His blood on the cross to pay for all sin (past, present, and future). He then rose from the dead, a victor over sin and the grave. His eternal life is given to all who trust in Him for salvation. Romans 5:6-8; I Corinthians 15:1-58; II Corinthians 5:21; Titus 2:13,14; Hebrews 2:9; Hebrews 9:11-28; I Peter 2:21-24.

E. *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.* The Holy Spirit is a Person possessing all the divine attributes. He is God. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement. He regenerates, baptizes, eternally indwells, and seals all believers at salvation. He sovereignly gives every believer at least one spiritual gift for service to the Body of Christ. John 16:7-11; Acts 5:3,4; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 6:19; I Corinthians 12:4-14; Ephesians 1:13,14.

1. The "sign gifts"; miracles, tongues, and healing, and gifts involving direct revelation from God; prophecy, wisdom, and knowledge, were temporary gifts designed to confirm the message of the Apostles and to lay the foundation of the first century church. Mark 16:15-20; Acts 2:42,43; Acts 5:12; II Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3,4. 2.

2. Tongues were always actual languages in use and were a sign to unbelievers. Tongues were not given as a "prayer language" nor to be the sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:4-11; I Corinthians 14:22. 3.

3. Healing is not guaranteed for this life. God sovereignly can and does still heal and perform miracles, however, these gifts are not in operation today. II Corinthians 12:8-10; I Timothy 5:23; James 5:14-16.

F. *The Nature of Mankind.* Man was created in the image and likeness of God, but in Adam's sin the race fell and inherited a sinful nature. Man is totally alienated from God and of himself is utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. Genesis 1:26,27; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 5:12; Romans 3:10-23; Ephesians 2:1-3.

G. *Salvation.* Salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Man is saved by undeserved mercy through faith and nothing of man enters into his salvation; it is a free gift. Man's efforts, before or after salvation, regardless of how good or well intended, do nothing to secure or guarantee salvation. Nothing can be added to the finished work of Christ. God is absolutely sovereign yet holds man responsible for accepting or rejecting the salvation He has provided. It is God's will that all should be saved and that none should perish. John 1:12,13; 3:7-18; Acts 16:31; Romans 5:6-10; Titus 3:5; II Peter 3:9.

1. Repentance is necessary for salvation, but the word does not

mean "to turn from sin." No human works are involved in the salvation process. God does not accept us because we make ourselves worthy of Him. Romans 4:1-8; Ephesians. 2:8-10.

2. Repentance for salvation means a change of mind from men's ideas of salvation and religion to acceptance of God's way of salvation. Acts 17:29-31; 20:21.

3. "Shallow Christianity" cannot be cured by adding works to the gospel but by a correct understanding of salvation and grace. Galatians 5:1-4; Titus 2:11-14.

H. *The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.* Every true child of God possesses eternal life and is, therefore, safe and secure for all eternity. Being justified by faith, sanctified by God, and sealed by the Holy Spirit, he cannot lose his salvation. However, a Christian can, through sin, lose his fellowship, joy, power, testimony, and reward, and incur the Father's chastisement. Relationship is eternal, being established by the new birth. Fellowship, however, is dependent upon obedience. John 10:22-30; Romans 8:37-39; I Corinthians 3:10-17; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 12:5-11; I Corinthians 11:30-32 (see also references under "G")

I. *The Christian Life.*

1. A true child of God has two births, one of the flesh, the other of the Spirit, giving man a flesh nature and a Spirit nature. The flesh nature is neither good, nor righteous. The spiritual nature is totally righteous. This results in warfare between the Spirit and the flesh, which continues until physical death or the return of the Lord. The flesh nature does not change in any way with the new birth, but is controlled by yielding to the Spirit. John 3:6; Romans 7:15-25; Romans 6:1-23; 8:8; Galatians 5:17; I John 1:8.

2. I John 1:9 is a precious promise to Christians for cleansing and forgiveness, not a verse for salvation. It does not guarantee restoration from physical damage caused by sin, rather, it teaches that confession of sin places the Christian in a position of fellowship.

J. *The Church.*

1. The Universal Church, which is the body and bride of Christ, began with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It is made up of all true believers who have been placed into Christ's body by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:4-5; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 10:47; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 5:23-32.

2. The Local Church should duplicate or manifest the pattern seen in "the Church which is His body". It is an assembly of believers called together by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of glorifying Christ through worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching, witnessing of Christ, and the observance of the ordinances of baptism by immersion and communion. Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 11:18-26; Ephesians 4:11-16.

K. *The Person and Work of Satan.* Satan is a person, the author of sin, and the open and declared enemy of God and man. He and his angels shall be eternally punished. Ezekiel 28:15,17; Isaiah 14:12-15; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10.

L. *Future Events.*

1. We believe in the personal, pretribulational, and premillennial return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He will come before the seven year tribulation period to "catch away" His Bride, the church, coming only in the air. He will return to earth with His church at the close of the tribulation to judge the living nations and to set up His Kingdom. Isaiah 26:21; John 14:1-3; I Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-5:11; II Thessalonians 2:1-8; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-20:6

2. There will be a physical, bodily resurrection of the saved and of the lost; of the saved unto eternal life and of the lost unto eternal, conscious punishment. Daniel 12:2; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:5-15.

We acknowledge that the above articles of faith in no way exhaust the content of our faith, which is the entire Word of God. We do believe that these articles are an accurate representation of the sound doctrine taught in the Scriptures.

Article V - Organization

The government of this church is a Theocracy, that is, it is ruled by God. Faith Community Church, being a part of the Body of Christ, is a living organism, with Christ as its only Head. In order to ensure the purity of faith and the unity of the body, including all support activities, such as the conduct of its necessary business, the management of its property, and the supervision of its work, God has ordained the following offices.

A. Elders/Overseers

1. *Function* - The term elder is not an official title, but a description of the duties and/or characteristics of the person serving in that capacity. Divine arrangement throughout the New Testament is for the plurality of these elders in each church. The elders serve as a unit and are charged with the oversight of the local body. It is the duty of the elders to ensure conformity to Scripture so that an atmosphere exists that allows for the spiritual growth of each individual member. The congregation submits to the spiritual oversight of Christ's undershepherds, who must give an account to God for their ministry. Hebrews 13:7,17; I Peter 5:1-4. Elders do not determine the will of God for individual Christians, but are charged by God to oversee everything that pertains to the body as a whole, so that each member is free to do the work of the ministry. Acts 20:28-32; Ephesians 4:11-16.

2. *Unity of Spirit* - All decisions made by the elders will be implemented only if they are unanimous. The responsibility of the elders is to base their decisions on Scripture. If at any time the elders find that God's Word speaks more precisely to an issue than they have previously understood, they will amend their decision. Titus 1:5,9; II Timothy 3:16,17.

3. *Qualifications* - The qualifications for elders are set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:1-9. These qualifications indicate a man's present testimony within and outside of the congregation. No condition prior to a man's salvation will necessarily disqualify him. II Corinthians 5:17; I Timothy 1:12-16. The qualifications are high but are no different than the testimony expected by God of all believers. These qualifications, which indicate spiritual maturity, are necessary since elders are to be examples of a life

of faith and the grace of God.

4. *Selection Process* - Potential elders are not selected on the basis of their executive abilities, financial success, public relation skills, or spiritual gifts. They are recognized as qualified by the elders and confirmed by the congregation as outlined in the by-laws. Acts 14:23; 20:28; Titus 1:5; Hebrews 13:17.

5. *Term of Service* - Since no time limits are ever given, we believe that the Scriptures demonstrate the perpetuity of this function.

Once the individual is recognized as an elder, this spiritual designation shall continue as long as he desires to serve and meets the biblical qualifications. I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.

B. Pastors

1. *Function* - The term pastor means shepherd. It is used of elders whose vocation is the ministry. The pastors are to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry through their preaching, teaching, example, and guidance in conforming to the Scripture. Ephesians 4:11-16; II Timothy 4:1-5.

2. *Qualifications* - Pastors shall be qualified as elders and recognized by the elders as suited to serve with them as pastors. I Timothy 4:11-16

3. *Selection Process* - The pastors shall be determined as qualified by the elders and confirmed by the congregation as outlined in the by-laws Acts 14:23; I Timothy 4:14-16; Titus 1:5.

4. *Financial Provision* - Those elders who devote full time to the ministry are to have their physical needs met by those who receive their spiritual service. The elders, as overseers, are to ensure that those needs are being met. I Corinthians 9:11; Galatians 6:6; I Timothy 5:17, 18.

5. *Term of Service* - The term of service is indefinite. The guidelines for resignation or removal of a pastor are given in the by-laws.

C. Deacons

1. *Function* - The term deacon means servant. The deacons therefore assist the elders in serving the church body. The specific areas of service will be determined by the needs that arise. These needs may be permanent or temporary in nature.

2. *Qualifications* - The qualifications of deacons are set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. These qualifications indicate a man's present testimony within and outside the congregation. No condition prior to a man's salvation will necessarily disqualify him. II Corinthians 5:17; I Timothy 1:12-16.

The qualifications are high but are no different than the testimony expected by God of all believers. These qualifications, which indicate spiritual maturity, are necessary since deacons are to be examples of a life of faith and the grace of God.

3. *Selection process* - Potential deacons are not selected on the basis of their executive abilities, financial success, public relation skills, or spiritual gifts. They are recognized as qualified by the elders and confirmed by the congregation as outlined in the by-laws. Acts 6:1-7; I Timothy 3:8-15.

4. *Term of Service* - Guidelines for the term of service are outlined in the By-Laws

By-Laws

The By-Laws are the rules of Faith Community Church which are not specifically addressed in scripture. Each by-law, however, is consistent with, and is derived from, the general tenor of Scripture.

Article I.- Membership

A. Requirements for membership

Persons 12 years old or older giving their testimony to a Pastor or elder as to their:

1. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
2. Baptism at some point after salvation
3. Assent to the Articles of Doctrine and constitution of Faith Community Church shall be received into the fellowship of the church. Acts 2:41,42

B. Reasons for Membership

1. For the Church:
 - a. To provide a means to ensure doctrinal purity, commitment, and accountability for the congregation. .
 - b. To provide a minimum requirement for teaching or leadership ministry in the church body.
 - c. To provide a focus for pastoral ministries.
 - d. To provide a foundation for church discipline.
2. For the Individual:
 - a. To provide opportunity for commitment to this community of believers
 - b. To allow for full participation in the ministries of this church

3. Membership and Ministry Because of these reasons we consider it vital that membership be stressed within our community of believers. Nonmembers may serve in various capacities. However, they may not have an official position of ministry such as Bible Study teacher or leader, junior church teacher, etc.

C. Responsibilities of Members

1. Public Worship - As believers we can, and should worship in every place and in every circumstance, however, the Bible exhorts us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. As we gather together we honor the Lord, honor one another, and participate in a service which is designed to direct our hearts to the living God. Hebrews 10:25
2. Fellowship - The personal contact of members of the church

family is the unifying factor which strengthens and encourages each believer in the faith. Meeting in fellowship provides the means for us to minister to one another by sharing our lives, our blessings, and our burdens. I John 1:7, Romans 12:15, Ephesians 4:1-3; 15-16

3. Bible Study - Church members are responsible to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by studying the Word in private and family devotions. II Timothy 2:15, II Peter 3:18

4. Service - It is the responsibility and the privilege of each member to serve in the ministry of the local church. Without such service the local church could not function. Ephesians 4:11,12

5. Prayer - It is the responsibility of members to pray for the ministry of the local church and its outreach. It is their duty to remember those who minister, those who teach, those in need, and the fellow members of The Body. I Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 18,19; Ephesians 1:15-19

6. Witness - Because God has entrusted to us "the word of reconciliation", each member has a sacred obligation to share his faith with unbelievers. Involvement in the various phases of the church life greatly encourages us to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior: "Go into all the world..." Matthew 28:18-20, II Corinthians 5:18-20

7. Giving - Members should become acquainted with the financial needs of the local church and its outreach, and share financially in its ministry. Giving should be systematic and proportionate as God has blessed. I Corinthians 16:1,2; II Corinthians 9:6,7

8. Submission to Authority - Members of a local church are called to submission to our Lord and His Word. Within the framework of the church this is expressed by members' willing subjection to the Lord as supreme, to the Word of God as absolute authority, and to the oversight of the elders. Colossians 1:18; II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 13:7,17

9. Personal Holiness - By the grace and power of God, as strangers and pilgrims, members will strive to abstain from all forms of activity which would dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ or cause stumbling to a fellow believer. Members are called upon to walk circumspectly in the world by being just in their dealings, faithful in their engagements, and exemplary in their manner of living; and to be zealous in their efforts to advance the Kingdom of God. Members will avoid all gossip, backbiting, and unrighteous anger and will be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us. Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:17-5:21

D. Termination of membership

A member who moves from the area and transfers to another church shall be removed from the roll. To prevent a member of the body from leaving simply to avoid resolving problems, membership will only be terminated by the mutual consent of the member and the elders. A member who has been inactive for a period of one year or

more may be removed from the roll at the discretion of the elders unless that member:

1. is away from home for a temporary period of time such as; involved in the military service, or attending college.
2. requests in writing to remain a member for other reasons which shall be reviewed by the elders.

E. Church Discipline

Any member who is out of harmony with the doctrines and purposes of the church as outlined in the constitution and by-laws shall be approached in a spirit of brotherly love by any combination of two or more elders for reconciliation as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17.

F. Voting

Since the church is a Theocracy, as described in Article V of the Constitution, there will be few votes. When voting is necessary, such as in major financial decisions or confirmation of church leaders, information concerning these votes or confirmations will be distributed to the membership either by mail, handouts, or announced at three consecutive Sunday morning services prior to the vote. Voting privileges are extended to members 18 years of age or older who are not under church discipline and are regular in attendance. In addition to these votes, All members are urged to communicate any desires, ideas, concerns, problems or any other thoughts that pertain to the ministry of the church, as soon as they arise.

Article II. Church Leadership

A. Elders

1. Selection of Elders

a The selection Process for elders will be based on:

- (1) A desire to be an elder I Timothy 3:1
- (2) Qualifications to function as an elder I Timothy 3:2-7
- (3) An interview with the elders I Peter 5:1-5
- (4) Confirmation by the congregation
- (5) Installation by the elders

b The selection process may be initiated at any time by the elders seeking additional elders or by a member who desires to be an elder.

c Members shall prayerfully consider each man for three weeks. Anything which could disqualify a candidate should be presented to the candidate.

d After three weeks members shall be asked to respond to the following statement during a regular Sunday morning service:

"After prayerful consideration, we acknowledge _____ as an elder and submit to his spiritual oversight. We promise to pray that he may be Spirit-controlled. In confirming this man, we know of nothing that would disqualify him from his service to the church."

e New elders shall be ordained by the existing elders at the Sunday morning service on which they are confirmed.

2. Elders as trustees - The elders shall act as the trustees of

B. Pastors

1. When there is a need for a Pastor, the elders will act as the selection committee. They will consider only one candidate at a time.

a. Selection Process

- (1) Any candidate for a position of Pastor must:
 - (a) Qualify as a member
 - (b) Qualify as an elder
 - (c) Become familiar to the congregation by ministering to them during a period of candidacy. The members shall prayerfully consider the candidate during this time and shall submit to the elders in writing, any questions or concerns that they may have regarding the candidate.
 - (d) Receive unanimous recommendation of the elders
 - (e) Receive a vote of approval (of those present and eligible to vote) at a regular Sunday service
 - (f) Accept the position
 - (g) Be installed
 - (h) Receive a quarterly review by the elders for one year.

b. Financial provisions, benefits, length of vacations, and other considerations shall be determined by the current Pastors and Staff Benefits Policy.

2. Termination of service - A Pastor may resign by giving a written notice of intention to resign at least thirty (30) days in advance, unless otherwise approved by the elders. If the elders determine that a pastor becomes disqualified because of change in doctrine, disharmony with the purposes of the church, or failure to meet the qualifications in I Timothy 3:2-8, he will be dealt with according to the mandates of Matthew 18:15-17.

C. Deacons

1. Selection of Deacons

a. The selection process for deacons will be based on:

- (1) A willingness to be responsible for a specific area of service
- (2) Qualifications to function as a deacon I Timothy 3:8-13. 13
- (3) An interview with the elders I Peter 5:1-5
- (4) Confirmation by the congregation
- (5) Installation by the elders

b. The selection process may at any time be initiated by the elders seeking additional deacons or by a member who desires to be a deacon.

c. Members shall prayerfully consider each man for three weeks. Anything which could disqualify a candidate should be presented to the candidate.

d. After three weeks members shall be asked to respond to the following statement during a regular Sunday morning service:

"After prayerful consideration, we acknowledge _____ as a deacon. We promise to pray that he may be Spirit-controlled. In confirming this man, we know of nothing that would disqualify him from his service to the church."

e. New deacons shall be installed by the elders at the Sunday morning service on which they are confirmed by the congregation.

2. Term of Service

The term of service shall be one year. In September of each year, each deacon shall be given the opportunity to renew the commitment of his service for the coming year, providing he continues to meet the qualifications outlined in By-Law Article II C. 1.a.(2). A deacon may, however, take a leave from his responsibilities if the need arises

3. Coordination with elders

The deacons, in their function of assisting the elders, are to meet formally with the elders in January, May, and September for prayer and planning.

Article III - Ordained Positions Of Ministry Outside the Church

A. When there is a need to ordain an individual for ministry outside of the local church, such as chaplains, missionaries, etc., the elders will interview the candidate and if appropriate, approve and carry out ordination.

1. Any candidate for ordination must:

- a. Be a member of Faith Community Church
- b. Meet the spiritual qualifications for ordination as defined in I Timothy 3:2-7
- c. Receive unanimous recommendation of the elders

Article IV - Finances

A. In an effort to provide a scripturally positive example of proper financial stewardship, this church will not borrow money.

B. The treasurer shall be responsible for receiving and disbursing all funds and shall maintain accounts under the direction of the elders. His accounts shall show the true financial status of all funds entrusted to him at all times.

C. A monthly accounting of the income and expenses shall be printed for all to review.

Article V - Amendments

This Constitution including By-Laws may be amended by the following process:

A. The elders shall unanimously submit the change to the members during three consecutive Sunday services

giving the details of the modification.

B. The members shall prayerfully consider the amendment during these three weeks and shall submit to the elders, in writing, any questions or concerns that they may have regarding the amendment.

C. The elders will respond, in writing, to any concerns expressed.

D. After three weeks members shall be asked to respond to the following statement during a regular Sunday morning service:

"After prayerful consideration, we acknowledge _____ as a Biblically based change and agree to support the constitution with this amendment."