

GATHER HOUSTON

Constitution and Bylaws

First Edition - January 2019

Preamble

These Constitution and Bylaws are made to preserve and secure the purpose & direction of our community, ensure freedom and independence from any religious body or organization, and provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs. The Gather Houston Constitution, Bylaws, and any future amendments will be make public on the Gather Houston website.

The Constitution and Bylaws put forth here govern the affairs of Gather Houston, a Texas nonprofit corporation. The IRS recognizes Gather Houston as a not-for-profit entity and operates under the Employee Identification Number (EIN) 83-2058280. All official paperwork related to the operations, licenses, and holdings of Gather Houston are to be kept at the primary Gather Houston facility.

Constitution

Article One: Name

The name of this church is Gather Houston, of Houston, Texas. The principal address of Gather Houston is 5103 Grape St. Houston, TX 77096.

Article Two: Purpose

The purpose of Gather Houston is to be a Christian community growing in our understanding of God, growing in our understanding of the Scriptures, and growing in our understanding of who we are made to be.

We accomplish this purpose by practicing the way of Jesus in all parts of life and for the good of all people.

Article Three: Articles of Faith

1. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are central to our faith and understanding of who God is and who we are meant to be.
2. We use Christian tradition as a guide for our theological beliefs and understanding of scripture.
3. We hold to the authority of the Bible. We believe the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus and is our primary source for encountering and understanding God.
4. We affirm both the Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed as the essential orthodox Christian beliefs.

Article Four: Government

Gather Houston is solely governed under the direction of its Board of Directors ("The Board"). The direction determined by the Board is executed by Lead Pastor.

The details of this government and operation are to be laid out in the following Bylaws.

Article Five: Nonprofit Status and Liquidation

Gather Houston is not organized for profit. In the event of liquidation or dissolution of the church, all of its assets and property of every nature and description whatsoever shall be paid over and transferred at the direction of a Church Officer to a designated Christian non-profit. Liquidation or dissolution requires a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors.

Article Six: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and shall end on December 31 of each calendar year.

Article Seven: Review

The Board and Lead Pastor must review and affirm Constitution and Bylaws at least once every three years.

Article Eight: Amendments

Any proposed amendments made to the Constitution or Bylaws must be passed by the Board with a majority vote.

Bylaws

Article One: Church Membership

A. Overview:

The members of Gather Houston have no governing or fiduciary responsibility. Being a member of Gather is a relational commitment open to anyone who desires to follow Jesus, connect to the community, and use their gifts to advance the mission of Gather.

B. Reaffirmation of Membership

In order to maintain a current understanding of our community, members will annually reaffirm their desire to stay in relationship with Gather. This reaffirmation will happen every January.

C. Duties and Privileges

1. Members will be invited to an annual business meeting to hear a Board report on the health and direction of the church.
2. If necessary at the annual business meeting, members will approve on the recommendation of the Board the:
 - a. Election of new Board Members
 - b. Election of new Lead Pastor
 - c. Special business brought by the Board
3. Approval requires a simple majority. Members unable to attend in person will receive an agenda and minutes from the meeting and will be able to cast their vote electronically within 1 week of the meeting.

Article Two: Board of Directors

A. Overview

1. It is the duty of the Gather Board to govern the affairs of Gather, and to maintain the spiritual, legal, and financial accountability of Gather.
2. All Board members must be members of the church.
3. A simple majority of the Board, present in person, shall constitute a quorum for all Board meetings.
4. In the event of a tie, the motion will be tabled for at least one 1 week. After at least 1 week, the chairman will call for a second vote. If the second votes results in a tie, the Lead Pastor will break the tie.
5. All Board members must be notified at least 48 hours in advance of any official Board meetings.
6. The officers of the church will be the Chair, the Treasurer, and the Lead Pastor. The Board will select a Chair and Treasurer annually.

B. Composition:

1. There should be no less than 5 Board members at any time.
2. Board terms are be three calendar years.
3. Board members cannot serve more than 2 terms consecutively.
4. Spouses may serve on the Board together for 1 term, but cannot serve consecutive terms together.

5. The Lead Pastor holds a permanent position on the Board.

C. Election & Expulsion:

1. When a Board vacancy occurs, or the Board agrees to add a member, the Chair of the Board will recommend new Board members for approval at the annual church business meeting. Approval requires a simple majority.
2. If the Board drops below 5 members at any time, the Chair of the Board will be responsible for calling a special church business meeting and recommending new Board members for approval by the members of the church. This special church business meeting must be held within 60 days the Board dropping below 5 members, and approval of these new Board members requires a simple majority.
3. In the event a Board member consistently operates outside the defined Board duties, suffers a moral failure, or demonstrates a significant lack of judgment, they may be removed from the Board by a unanimous vote of the remaining members.

D. Duties:

1. The Board holds the primary responsibility for the direction and vision of the church.
2. The Board approves the job description and compensation of the Lead Pastor.
3. The Board will elect a chairperson.
 - a. The Chair will act as a Church Officer, will organize the Board meetings, will work with the Lead Pastor to identify goals and areas of growth for the church, and will present a report at the annual church business meeting.
4. The Board will elect a treasurer.
 - a. The Treasurer will be the custodian of all church funds and is authorized to disburse these funds as authorized by the church.

- b. The Treasurer will maintain a financial reporting system that allows for the Board to receive quarterly updates on the financial health of the church.
 - c. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Board.
 - d. In the event that Gather hires a staff member to manage the accounting system, the Treasurer's role shifts from management to oversight.
5. The Board determines the general constraints and boundaries of acceptable activity, decisions, and authority for the Lead Pastor.
 6. The Board serves as a committee of counsel to assist the pastor concerning the progress and welfare of the church.
 7. The Board is responsible for ensuring that Biblical conflict resolution is followed within the Church.
 8. The Board shall approve by simple majority an annual church budget, submitted by the Pastor and the Treasurer.
 9. In the absence of the pastor, the chairperson of the Board shall serve as an advisory member to all organizations, departments, and staff members of the church.
 10. The Board is required to meet once per quarter.
 11. The Board has the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action.

Article Three: The Lead Pastor

A. Overview

1. The Lead Pastor is directly responsible for the daily oversight, operations, and general ministry of the church.

2. As the Board's primary link to the staff and internal operations, the Lead Pastor's performance encompasses organizational performance.
3. The Board has the ability to terminate the employment of the Lead Pastor for failing to work within the boundaries set below, for failing to uphold the mission of the church, or for major moral failure. Termination of employment requires a 2/3 vote of the Board.

B. Restraints

1. The Lead Pastor must have the approval of the Board to spend any money outside of the approved annual budget.
2. The Lead Pastor will not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is unlawful, imprudent, or in violation of generally accepted business and professional ethics.
3. The Lead Pastor will not cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or compromised fiduciary responsibility.
4. The Lead Pastor will not allow a course of study, appoint a church leader, or partner with an outside organization that undermines Gather's theological values.

C. Responsibilities:

1. The general responsibilities of the Lead Pastor are preaching, teaching, pastoral care, administration, casting vision, and guiding the church to fulfill its purposes.
2. The Lead Pastor shall lead the church, the organization, and all leaders of the church in performing their tasks of worship, discipleship, and outreach.

Article Four: Additional Pastors & Church Staff

A. Overview

1. Any number of additional pastors or staff may serve to fulfill the mission and vision of the church.
2. These staff and pastors will be selected by the Lead Pastor and recommended to the Board for hire.
3. Staff and pastors will be managed by and report to the Lead Pastor.

Article Five: Published Records

A. Overview

1. In a desire for transparency and accountability Gather will publish the Constitution and Bylaws, Board meeting minutes, and the approved annual budget.

B. Constitution & Bylaws

1. The Constitution & Bylaws, as well as any amendments, will be made public on the Gather website.
2. An updated edition must be published within 30 days of approval.

C. Board Meeting Minutes

1. Board meeting minutes summarizing all material discussion points and decisions will be recorded and will be made public on the Gather website within 30 days of any official Board meeting.
2. The Board may withhold employee records and notes regarding conflict within the church from the published minutes.

D. Financial Documents

1. An annual budget will be made public on the Gather website within 30 days of Board approval.
2. A summary of the previous year's financial activities will be made public on the Gather website by the end of February. (Ex. 2018 SOA will be published by 2/28/19)