



Gallatin, Tennessee

FAITH CHURCH Bylaws

January 1, 2016

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Romans 12:1-2 NASB

ARTICLE I – NAME & MISSION

Section 1: Name

Chartered in the State of Tennessee on January 31, 2012, this church is FAITH CHURCH of Gallatin, Tennessee and shall be known as FAITH CHURCH.

Section 2: Vision and Mission

1. The Vision for FAITH CHURCH is to be a like-minded people committed to **Loving, Learning, and Living Like Jesus.**
2. The Mission of FAITH CHURCH is to **Grow the Saved to Reach the Lost.** (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 28:19-20).

ARTICLE II – GOVERNANCE & AFFILIATION

Section 1: Governance

The governance of FAITH CHURCH is vested in Jesus Christ our Lord and is entrusted to His body, the local church, i.e., the Pastors, Elders, Deacons and members who compose FAITH CHURCH. All governance will be enacted in accordance with the Bible, our Statement of Faith, Faith Covenant, and these bylaws. In matters of governance, no part of these bylaws may be considered apart from the whole. The Pastors/Elders of FAITH CHURCH shall have final authority in all matters of church governance.

Section 2: Affiliation

FAITH CHURCH shall be affiliated with and actively support the Tennessee Baptist Convention under the Southern Baptist Convention. (We actively support the Cooperative Program with regular budgeted giving.) Though affiliated with SBC/TBC, FAITH CHURCH is subject to the control of no ecclesiastical body.

ARTICLE III – BELIEFS

FAITH CHURCH will be structured, governed, and operated in accordance with:

1. **The Holy Bible** – that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which as originally written does not only contain and convey the Word of God but IS the very Word of God. This inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe.
2. **Our Statement of Faith** – which does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs but rather expresses the purposes of FAITH CHURCH's faith, doctrine, practice, and policies as found in the Bible.
3. **Our Faith Covenant** – a mutual agreement of church life and practices for members of FAITH CHURCH.
4. **The Baptist Faith and Message** – FAITH CHURCH affirms the doctrines presented in this book by the SBC.

ARTICLE IV – CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES ON SEXUALITY

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the beliefs of FAITH CHURCH.

1. **Meaning** – As with all things, we affirm the Bible as the final authority on all matters and deny that the God-ordained institution of marriage and human sexuality is subject to redefinition as merely a civil institution or simply a private matter.
2. **Forgiveness** – As with all sin, we believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
3. **Relationships** - We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a formal marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful, and offensive to God; thus in need of confession, forgiveness, and discontinuance (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

4. **Marriage** - We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, FAITH CHURCH will only recognize marriages between a biologically born man and a biologically born woman. Further, the Pastors/Elders and staff of FAITH CHURCH shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one biologically born man and one biologically born woman. In order to preserve the function and integrity of FAITH CHURCH as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the FAITH CHURCH members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by FAITH CHURCH in any capacity, or who serve as workers or volunteers, agree to and abide by these statements in the FAITH CHURCH Bylaws. Finally, the facilities and property of FAITH CHURCH shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

5. **Gender** - We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one’s innate, inherent, and born biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We affirm God’s good design that gender identity is determined by born biological sex and not by one’s self-perception—a perception which is often influenced by fallen human nature in ways contrary to God’s design (Ephesians 4:17–18). Sex change is not part of God’s design and thus sinful, and offensive to God. As with all sin it requires confession and forgiveness, and discontinuance of that lifestyle.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

Membership at FAITH CHURCH is a covenant agreement and a privilege not taken lightly. FAITH CHURCH membership shall be composed of individuals who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who affirm the tenets of the FAITH CHURCH Statement of Faith, Faith Covenant, and these bylaws, and who offer evidence, by their confession and their conduct, that they are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 1: Core Components

Membership at FAITH CHURCH means everything we say and do is based on a biblical foundation of love with the following commitment:

1. I will be a functioning church member (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12)
2. I will be a unifying church member (John 13:35, Ephesians 4:1-2, Colossians 3:12-14)

Section 2: FAITH CHURCH Membership

Members of this church shall consist of persons who have taken these actions:

1. Repented of sin and have surrendered life to Jesus Christ as Savior and do publicly acknowledge Him as Lord.
2. Baptized by immersion as a testimony and commitment to faith in Christ.
3. Completed the church membership information sheet, have read and agreed to the Statement of Faith, Faith Covenant, and FAITH CHURCH Bylaws, and are committed to building FAITH CHURCH and the Body of Christ.
4. Officially have been accepted and affirmed by the Pastor/Elders of FAITH CHURCH.

Section 3: General Membership Guidelines

1. Members of FAITH CHURCH shall consider each leader accountable before God for FAITH CHURCH and will pray for them and follow their leadership accordingly.

2. Non-member attendees of the church will not be ascribed membership benefits or leadership responsibilities.
3. A member who does not regularly attend FAITH CHURCH functions nor provide regular financial support for a period of six months will be considered inactive and member privileges will be suspended. Contact will be made with an inactive member with the attempt to reconcile and/or restore that member to right fellowship. If this correspondence yields no response, the inactive member will be removed from membership. At FAITH CHURCH we do not keep a record of inactive members.
4. Membership to FAITH CHURCH may be refused to anyone engaged in habitual, willful sin or whose behavior is biblically offensive and in violation of the FAITH CHURCH beliefs.
5. Members' children, who are under 18 years of age, are not considered official members and do not carry the same voting privileges as their parents/legal guardians.
6. Children under 18 years of age, who have professed faith in Jesus Christ and have been biblically baptized, will be considered non-voting members under the authority of their parents/legal guardians.
7. Children turning 18 years old will be encouraged to submit to a member interview to receive full membership privileges.

Section 4: Disciplinary Action

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. Thus the threefold purpose of church discipline is to **glorify God** by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to **edify believers** by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Timothy 5:20), and to **promote the spiritual welfare** of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

Because it is the desire of FAITH CHURCH that all members walk in a manner worthy of our Lord Jesus Christ, the following principles shall apply:

1. Any member of FAITH CHURCH who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Pastors/Elders, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is committing unrepentant sin, shall be subject to church discipline as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20. In an effort to bring the individual to repentance, discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and The Lord's Supper, or may even result in the dismissal of the individual from the fellowship of FAITH CHURCH.
2. Every effort will be made to kindly guide, correct, and lead to repentance any member not following a path of righteousness.
3. Matthew 18 principles will apply to any disciplinary actions.
4. It is expected that any member whose behavior is biblically offensive and in violation of our beliefs will seek biblical counsel and reconciliation or remove themselves from membership.
5. Removal from leadership (Pastor, elder, staff, deacon, teacher/worker) will occur for violation of our beliefs. Membership will be continued for this individual only in as much as the person is willing to repent and change their behavior.

Section 5: Member Termination

Membership and/or employment shall be terminated for any of the following:

1. Transfer of membership to another church
2. Erasure due to affiliation/membership with another faith or church

3. Inactive member after six months (A 30-day correspondence period will be given in attempt to reconcile an inactive member.)
4. Member resignation
5. Death
6. Disciplinary action
7. If membership is terminated for any reason, persons returning to the church for reinstatement of membership will need to repeat the Membership process.

ARTICLE VI – LEADERSHIP: PASTORS, ELDERS, & STAFF

We believe that leaders are called by God to work among us at FAITH CHURCH (Hebrews 13:17). The leadership of FAITH CHURCH will be elder-governed, pastor-led, and deacon-supported.

Section 1: Pastors

Pastors, or shepherd-teachers (Ephesians 4), are called men of God who lead and equip the saints at FAITH CHURCH for ministry and service in accordance with FAITH CHURCH's bylaws, Statement of Faith and Faith Covenant. They lead by example and provide and guide the biblical instruction for FAITH CHURCH. These called men, in vocational ministry, may also serve as Elders as requested. Therefore, the following principles apply:

1. Jesus Christ is the head of this church and the Lead Pastor is His under-shepherd. It is assumed that he is called by God to this position and that he will follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Lead Pastor is the primary teacher and preacher for FAITH CHURCH and is responsible, along with the Elders, to guard the doctrine and polity of FAITH CHURCH according to the Bible, FAITH CHURCH Statement of Faith and bylaws.
3. The Elders shall appoint new Pastors and Elders. Approval of new Pastors will require a presentation to members at a congregational meeting for timely consideration and affirmation.
4. Pastors and Elders may appoint staff members in accordance with the Trustees' budget.
5. Pastoral confirmation and termination
 - a. When the church becomes without a Lead Pastor, the Elders will serve as Moderators of the church. The Elders shall prayerfully search for the man God has chosen and bring that person to the congregation for confirmation and approval.
 - b. We consider each Pastor/Elder to be called by God and expect the Holy Spirit to guide him in any decision including his term of commitment to FAITH CHURCH. However, should the situation warrant the termination of any Pastor/Elder it will require that he be notified of relative meetings and require:
 - i. A thorough review and vote by Elders
 - ii. Affirmation of members present at a Congregational meeting.

Section 2: Elders

Elders are the overseers (bishops) of ministry described by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3. Together they shepherd, govern, teach, and counsel the people of FAITH CHURCH in accordance to God's Word, Statement of Faith, and Faith Covenant. Together with the Pastors they serve in providing spiritual leadership and accountability to each other and to the body of believers of FAITH CHURCH.

1. An elder will be a physically-older, spiritually-mature, biblically-qualified, relationally-respected male member of FAITH CHURCH.

2. Elders are spiritual leaders for FAITH CHURCH and serve with Pastors in guidance and spiritual oversight of the church. Elders may be employed by the church and serve in a staff/ministry position or be non-paid, lay elders.
3. Elders are appointed by the current Elders for indefinite service times and are presented to the members for affirmation.

Section 3: Church Staff

1. All staff members are to be committed to the FAITH CHURCH Bylaws, Statement of Faith, and Faith Covenant. With rare exception (approved by the Elders), a non-member of FAITH CHURCH may serve as an employee in a service role.
2. Staff members are recruited and approved by the Pastors and Elders, with consultation of the trustees.
3. Each staff position is to have a written position description.
4. Each staff member will have an annual performance review with the supervising Pastor.
5. The Pastors and Elders are responsible for the retention or termination of all staff members.
6. Should a staff issue involve a Pastor, then the matter is to be taken to the Elders for review and action.

ARTICLE VII – LEADERSHIP: DEACONS, CLERK, & TRUSTEES

Section 1: Deacons

The Deacons serve the Body of Christ at FAITH CHURCH in the practical areas of ministry.

1. Appointed Deacons shall constitute the Deaconate (the official body of Deacons) and shall meet the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6.
2. The Deacon will be a male, ordained servant of FAITH CHURCH and fulfill four purposes:
 - a. Meet the practical and physical needs of the church
 - b. Promote unity of the body
 - c. Support the ministry of the Word
 - d. Encourage and support the ministry of the Pastors
3. Deacons may be added and approved based on the following:
 - a. The candidate must be an active member of FAITH CHURCH for at least one year.
 - b. The candidate must have a good rapport among the members.
 - c. The candidate will have been nominated for service by the congregation, Pastors/Elders, and current Deacons.
 - d. Each candidate, and, if married, his spouse, must submit to an Elder interview and vote.
 - e. Final candidate names are to be published for the FAITH CHURCH membership at least 2 weeks prior to a congregational meeting. Members are encouraged to offer feedback concerning the candidate to the Pastors/Elders prior to the final approval.
4. Deacons are approved by the Pastors and Elders.

Section 2: Church Clerk

1. It is the responsibility of the Church Clerk to oversee and maintain a suitable record of all the official actions of the church.

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2. The Clerk is responsible for overseeing the register of membership including dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms and inactive designations.
3. The Church Clerk position is appointed by the Pastors/Elders.

Section 3: Trustees

Trustees are the servants of the Body of Christ at FAITH CHURCH through oversight of our financial and business aspects.

1. Trustees will include at least 3 members, one of which will be the designated Church Treasurer.
2. It is understood that a financial accounting will be made regularly to the Pastors and Elders and annually to the congregation with a budget for the next year submitted in advance for review and then for congregational approval and commitment.
3. Trustees are appointed and approved by the Pastors/Elders.
4. Trustees' responsibilities include:
 - a. Guide the finances of the church according to the approved budget.
 - b. Approve FAITH CHURCH staff positions, pay, and benefits, but not the person.
 - c. Hold in trust all physical and monetary possessions of the church. Trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, encumber, or transfer any property, but will guide and recommend such actions to the Pastors/Elders and/or membership for approval.
 - d. Provide official signatures for any legal documents where Trustee approval is required.
 - e. Oversee the investment and protection of all collected funds and assets.
 - f. Review and recommend for all unbudgeted requests.

Section 4: Church Treasurer

1. It is the responsibility of the Church Treasurer to oversee and maintain a suitable record of all the financial actions of the church including offerings and membership reporting. All funds received shall be properly accounted for and disbursed in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and United States law.
2. The Church Treasurer shall maintain and provide as necessary all reporting on finances and assets to the Pastors, Elders, Trustees, Deaconate, and Membership.
3. The Church Treasurer is responsible for oversight of all funds' collection and dispersal.
4. The Church Treasurer is responsible for oversight and approval of open accounts with necessary businesses.
5. The Church Treasurer position is appointed with Pastors/Elders approval.
6. The Church Treasurer is a member of the Trustees.

ARTICLE VIII – CORPORATE GUIDANCE

Section 1: Amendments

1. Official documents for FAITH CHURCH belief and operation include: FAITH CHURCH Bylaws, our Statement of Faith and our FAITH CHURCH Covenants.
2. FAITH CHURCH Bylaws may be amended through a recommendation from Pastors, Elders, or Deacons and approved through a 75% majority vote of the members present at a called congregational meeting.

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3. A first reading of a proposed change to the bylaws is to be given to the congregation at least one week before the called meeting in which the vote is taken. Adequate advance notice of the meeting is required.
4. Changes to the Statement of Faith and FAITH CHURCH Covenants will be determined by the Pastor/Elders.

Section 2: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the FAITH CHURCH will begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

Section 3: Congregational Meetings and Authority

1. Official membership meetings will be held twice per year.
2. Congregational vote will be necessary to:
 - a. Appoint or terminate a Lead Pastor
 - b. Sell, lease, or purchase land or primary buildings
 - c. Accept or reject budget
 - d. Amend bylaws
3. Special congregational meetings may be called by the Pastors or Elders.
4. Every attempt should be made to contact all members for any congregational meeting.
5. The quorum consists of those members who attend the called congregational meeting.
6. A 75% majority vote of the members present is required for passage of a motion.

Section 4: Church Facility, Possessions, & Property Use

The church's facilities/properties/possessions are provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of others. The church desires that its facilities be used for the Body of Christ and to bring God glory.

1. FAITH CHURCH believes that all possessions, properties or buildings, utilized under its auspices are to be used for the glory of God and in accordance with the beliefs of FAITH CHURCH.
2. Facility and property use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's beliefs. (Allowing its facilities, properties or possessions to be used for purposes that contradict the church's beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity, and would be a grave violation of the church's faith and religious practice. It could also cause confusion and scandal to church members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing use of our facilities, the church agrees with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using its facilities thus having a severe, negative impact on our message, integrity and community ministry.)
3. As previously stated in these bylaws, the facilities and property of FAITH CHURCH shall only host weddings between one biologically born man and one biologically born woman.
4. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, we may make our facilities/properties/possessions available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.
5. The Pastor/Elders are the final decision-makers concerning use of church facilities.