

# **RULES AND BY-LAWS GALILEE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

## **ARTICLE I:**

### **Section 1:**

The Galilee Christian Church from its organization in 1870 has continued consistently through the years to operate as an independent autonomous, local congregation of New Testament Christians, after the Divine pattern as set forth in the New Testament Scriptures, and at no time in its history has it yielded its liberty or independence in any matter of policy or administration in its affairs locally, or in its interest in benevolence, missions or education, to any group or agency or organization of any kind whatsoever. At no time, during the history of the Galilee Christian Church has it made any contribution, passed any law, enacted any motion, formed any alliance or fellowship that would make it any part of anything other than a local congregation of free men and women in Jesus Christ, interested in the spread of the gospel of the Risen Christ throughout the world, for the redemption of men and women from the consequences of sin and evil.

### **Section 2:**

The Galilee Christian Church shall look with fraternal favor upon the activities of all Brethren in Sister Christian Churches engaged in identical Christian activities as its own, but shall exist as a separate congregation, unattached to any, and beyond any control - real, actual, or advisory, of any other church, congregation, fellowship, agency, organization, publishing house, college or seminary, missionary society, evangelistic and/or benevolent organization, local, county, state, district, national or international convention, rally or organization, religious or otherwise, now existing or ever to be formed. This article shall not be subject to amendment, revocation and/or change.

## **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Galilee Christian Church shall be to conduct a church which is known among religious bodies as the Christian Church, and whose members are known as Christians only, and which Church shall be congregational in form of government, and shall have no creed or articles of faith other than those contained in the New Testament, and in which Church the New Testament ordinances of baptism and Lord's Supper shall be observed. Baptism shall be by immersion only.

## **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

The invitation to membership in Galilee Christian Church shall be extended to all, whosoever will believe with honesty and sincerity, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and so confess this faith before men, and be subsequently immersed in water into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins, and/or by transfer of membership from sister congregations of the Christian Church, holding identical membership requirements, and/or by transfer of membership from another church, where said candidate for membership has been previously immersed in water, *"into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."*

## **ARTICLE IV: GOVERNANCE**

The Galilee Christian Church as a New Testament Congregation shall be governed in all matters of faith and doctrine and Christian practice by the teaching of Christ and His apostles, as contained in the twenty-seven (27) New Testament Books, which with the thirty-nine (39) Books of the Old Testament, the Galilee Christian Church holds to be the Divinely Inspired Word of God. The Galilee Christian Church, as a New Testament Congregation, shall be governed in all matters of policy and procedure by the will of the congregation. The congregation vests in the Elders the privilege to act for it in all routine matters incidental to the usual church operation. The Chairman is designated to sign legal documents for the church as directed by the Elders.

## **ARTICLE V: ELDERS**

### **Section 1: Qualifications**

The Church adopts the prerequisites for elders and their families as they are stated in scripture:

1 Tim 3:2-4, 6-7. *"Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect...He must not be a recent convert ...he must have a good reputation with outsiders..."*

Titus 1:6-9. *"An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient...An overseer...must be blameless-not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught..."*

### **Section 2: Duties**

The Church adopts as duties of the elders those stated in scripture or implied by scriptural example: Handle finances (Acts 11:30); resolve doctrinal issues (Acts 15:6-29); keep watch (Acts 20:28); be shepherds (Acts 20:28); be on guard (Acts 20:31); direct the affairs of the church (1 Tim 5:17); be entrusted with God's work (Ti 1:7); encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it (Ti 1:9); pray over and anoint the sick (Jam 5:14); serve as overseers (1 Peter 5:2); be examples for the flock (1 Peter 5:3); and speak the word of God (Heb 13:7).

### **Section 3: Selection of Elders**

**Number.** The number of elders shall be three, five or seven as determined by the elders.

**Nomination.** Any member of the Church may nominate another member to serve as an elder by official nomination form. Nominations will end by the second Sunday in September.

**Screening.** The elders will screen all nominees to validate their qualifications and determine their availability for service. Nominees who pass the screening become candidates.

**Announcement and Introduction.** All candidates for eldership will be announced to and introduced to the congregation at each worship service during a two-week period.

**Election of Elders.** Elders will be elected by two thirds majority of votes cast on the last Sunday of October. In the event there is to be only one officer elected from two or more candidates, the candidate with a majority of the votes will be elected. All elections will be by ballot.

**Term of Office.** An elder shall serve a three-year term with a maximum of two consecutive terms. After the second term, an elder will not be considered for re-nomination for a period of one year. The term of office shall begin the first Sunday of the calendar year, regardless of the actual date of appointment; all ending terms shall expire at the time of ordination of new elder(s). Terms for elders will be on a staggered rotation. Initial implementation of this rotation will be at the discretion of the current elders.

**Removal.** An elder who becomes disqualified while in office shall be removed from office if a majority of the elders calls for his removal. If an elder needs to be replaced, the remaining elders will select from the deacons, for congregational approval, the most qualified to serve for the remaining term.

#### **Section 4: Meetings, Officers, and Decision-Making**

**Meetings.** The elders shall meet quarterly as a group or more frequently as they deem necessary, to direct the affairs of the Church. All regular board meetings shall be “open” and any church member is welcome to attend; however, visitors to the meetings shall have no official vote.

**Officers.** The elders shall elect from among themselves a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman during the first meeting in January each year, and at the first meeting after the resignation of either incumbent. These officers will serve a term of one-year, ending at the first meeting in January. They shall serve as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the elders during meetings of the elders, and as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Church during congregational meetings. The elders shall appoint a Secretary from among themselves, during the first meeting in January each year. The secretary shall perform duties at the discretion of the elders.

**Decision-making.** Decision-making within the elders will be accomplished by voting, with a simple majority being necessary to decide a motion. For non-unanimous votes, if the Chairman sides with the majority he shall have authority to delay implementation of a motion if he feels the issue warrants greater accord.

#### **Section 5: Jurisdiction**

The elders are appointed to be shepherds and overseers. As such, any committee, ministry team, Bible study group, or other such organization which exists as a subset of the Church, or which uses publications of the Church to announce its activities, or which uses the meetings of the Church as a time for recruitment for its church-related activities, regardless of where the organization meets, must place itself under the authority of the elders. The elders retain the authority to require standards of conduct for any organization which meets on the property of the Church, regardless of the purpose or function of the organization.

### **ARTICLE VI: DEACONS**

#### **Section 1: Qualifications**

The Church adopts the prerequisites for deacons and their families as they are stated in scripture: I Tim 3:8-9, 11-12. *"Deacons...are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not*

*indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience...their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well."*

## **Section 2: Duties**

A. The Church adopts as duties of the deacons those duties stated in scripture or implied by scriptural example: Service tasks that would otherwise distract church leaders from prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:2-4); giving testimony (Acts 7:2-53); proclaiming the gospel (Acts 8:5); and personal evangelism (Acts 8:35-38).

B. Deacons will be responsible for carrying out the decisions of the elders through specific assignments to committees and ministries. Deacons have the authority to recruit help to carry out these responsibilities.

## **Section 3: Number, Selection, Appointment, Term of Office, and Removal**

**Number.** The minimum number of deacons shall be three.

**Nomination, etc.** The process of nominating, screening, announcing, appointing, and reappointing deacons shall be the same as for elders (Art V, Sect 3).

**Election of Deacons.** Deacons will be elected by two thirds majority of votes cast on the last Sunday of October. In the event there is to be only one officer elected from two or more candidates, the candidate with a majority of the votes will be elected. Voting will be by ballot

**Term of Office.** The term of office for deacons shall be the same as for elders (Art V, Sect 3).

**Removal.** A deacon who becomes disqualified while in office shall be removed from office if a majority of the elders call for his removal, or under the removal clause of Art. V, Sect. 3.

## **ARTICLE VII: MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY LEADERSHIP**

The mission of the Church shall be carried out through member-led committees called ministries. The elders shall establish any and all policies regarding the leadership, function, and interaction of the ministries.

## **ARTICLE VIII: STAFF MEMBERS**

### **Section 1: Selections**

The Church shall employ staff members as deemed necessary by the elders to assist the Church in fulfilling its purpose. The elders shall establish any and all policies regarding the staff members of the Church. In the event a vacancy occurs in the senior minister of this church, the elders will elect a pulpit committee, composed of two (2) elders, two (2) deacons, and at least two (2) members of the congregation at large.

This committee will canvas the field of available New Testament Gospel Preachers and recommend their choice or choices for acceptance and approval of the elders, and if approved, recommend the prospective minister to the church board. It shall be the policy of the church to consider only one prospective minister at a time.

Election of the senior minister by the congregation will be by two thirds (2/3) majority vote at a meeting of the congregation. No candidate shall be considered for election unless he has preached a trial sermon at a Lord's Day worship service.

## **Section 2: Terminations**

The term of the senior minister shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated by either party upon sixty (60) days notice.

## **ARTICLE IX: CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

### **Section 1: Annual Meetings**

The Church shall make a report to the congregation each year on the last Sunday of October or on such other date as announced by the elders no less than 15 days prior to the meeting date. The meeting shall include approval of the fiscal budget.

The meeting shall also include a vote of affirmation for any incumbent leader (elder or deacon) selected by the elders for reappointment to a subsequent term. Any leader failing to garner the support of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting shall be removed from office and shall not be eligible for appointment to any office until the next annual meeting. Except as stated otherwise above, the voting members present shall constitute a quorum for all votes, and a simple majority shall suffice to pass a measure. All votes shall be by printed ballot. The ballots and records of votes cast for and against each candidate shall be kept by the church clerk for a period of 90 days following each election and shall be open for inspection to any member of the congregation.

### **Section 2: Called Meetings**

Special meetings of the Church may be called by the Chairman or the Vice-chairman of the elders. The date, place, time, and purpose of the meeting shall be established by the elders and be announced to the Church at a regular Sunday service, or by mail, not less than one week prior to the meeting.

### **Section 3: Special Meeting for Dismissal of the Senior Pastor**

The elders must call a special meeting of the Church prior to releasing the senior minister from employment. The purpose of the meeting will be to announce the intention of the elders and to hear the concerns of the members, not to obtain congregational approval.

### **Section 4. Special Meeting for the Sale of Real Estate**

The elders must call a special meeting of the Church prior to directing the sale or any other form of transfer of the real estate holdings of the Church. The purpose of the meeting will be to announce the intention of the elders and to hear the concerns of the Church, not to obtain congregational approval.

## **ARTICLE X: MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Section I: The Bible**

The Church does not endorse a particular translation or paraphrase of the Bible. Resolution of apparent conflicts of meaning among the versions shall be decided by referring to those versions generally regarded as most closely translating the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.

## **Section 2: Advocacy of Candidates for Public Office**

The Church shall not be involved in any activity which could be construed as an advocacy of a candidate for public office. Members retain their full rights as citizens to become involved in the democratic process at whatever level they desire.

## **Section 3: Leadership Succession**

**Shortage of Elders.** If the number of elders drops below the minimum requirements, the Chairman will announce to the congregation the opening of the selection process for the appointment of new elders. The Church will neither hire any staff member nor approve an increase in the annual budget until the minimum numbers of elders are in service.

**Lack of Elders.** If there is no incumbent elder, the deacon of longest tenure will act as Interim Chairman for the purpose of beginning the selection process for the appointment of new elders. The Interim Chairman and the senior staff member will constitute the screening committee for the elder nominees. If the Interim Chairman is to be an elder nominee he must first resign his position as Interim Chairman, appointing the deacon of next longest tenure in his place. The Interim Chairman shall not undertake any business of the Church other than the appointment of elders and business necessary for the day-to-day operations of the Church. The position of Interim Chairman will terminate upon appointment of a new elder.

**Lack of Elders and Deacons.** If there is no incumbent deacon, the senior staff member will act as Interim Chairman, with the same purpose, authority, and constraints as described in the preceding paragraph. He will form the screening committee from among the available staff members.

## **Section 4: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the Church shall be from January 1 to December 31.

## **ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS**

These by-laws may be amended at any annual or special meeting of the Church by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, provided a notice of the proposed amendment has been made available to all members no less than two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. This document rescinds any previous editions of the By-laws of Galilee Christian Church, Incorporated.

Galilee Christian Church was incorporated November 29, 1977. The IRS designated Galilee Christian Church as a 501-C3 tax exempt corporation in 1983.

Revised: (date)

Approved: (date)