



st. simons
community church

Our Church Structure and Constitution

*For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace...
Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.*
1 Corinthians 14:33,40

The following constitutes the Constitution of St. Simons Community Church, Inc., of St. Simons Island, Georgia.
Having received the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we bind ourselves together as a body of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the following statements of doctrine.

ARTICLE ONE – NAME & PURPOSE

Section 1. Name

The name of the organization shall be St. Simons Community Church of St. Simons Island, Georgia, a corporation.

Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of the church is to glorify God by the building up of believers and presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers in order that they too may be captured by Christ. (Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 3:17, Acts 2:42, Matthew 28:19-20).

ARTICLE TWO – FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINE

Section 1. The Scriptures

We believe that “all scripture is given by the inspiration of God,” and that the entire Bible is inspired in that holy men of God “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the very words of Scripture. We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writing – historical, poetical, doctrinal and prophetic – as appeared in the original manuscripts. We believe that every word in the original writings of the Bible is therefore, without error.

We believe that all Scriptures center around the Lord Jesus Christ in His person and work in His first and second coming, and hence that no portion even of the Old Testament, is properly read, or understood, until it leads to Him. We also believe that all the Scriptures were designed for our practical instruction. The Scriptures are accurate in all matters to which they speak: spiritual, historical and scientific.

The scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the foundations of the faith and practice of St. Simons Community Church. (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21)

Section 2. God

God exists eternally in three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The three have distinct personalities and yet are of the same substance, one God. (Genesis 1:1; John 10:30, 4:24; Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14.)

Section 3. Man

Man is created in the image and likeness of God. In Adam, all mankind fell into sin with the result that all men are sinners. God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Men are justly condemned to eternal judgment and can do nothing to merit salvation. (Romans 2:2-3, 2:5; Ephesians 2:1, 2:8-9; Genesis 1:27, 9:6; Romans 3:23, 5:12)

Section 4. Jesus Christ

The eternal Son of God became incarnate in the Lord Jesus Christ, being born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man. He died physically on the cross, was bodily resurrected three days later, and thereafter

bodily ascended to heaven, where at the right hand of God the Father, He is now our high priest and advocate. (John 1:1, 1:14, 1:18, 5:18; Hebrews 1:1-9, 5:8; 1 John 5:20, 1 Timothy 2:5, 1 Corinthians 15:1-5)

Section 5. Salvation

Salvation is received by faith alone in Jesus Christ. The only means to salvation is belief in Christ's substitutionary death and resurrection, which satisfied the wrath of God against the sin of the individual. There is an eternal state of punishment for the unsaved and an eternal state of blessing for the saved. (Acts 4:12, 13:38, 16:31, 16:39; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 4:4-5, 5:1, 8:29-30; John 3:16; Ephesians 1:4-5, 2:8-9)

Section 6. Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He convicts, regenerates, indwells, baptizes and seals all believers in Christ at the point of faith in Christ and empowers and instructs those yielded to God. (Matthew 28:19; John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 6:19, 12:13; Romans 8:9, Ephesians 4:30; Colossians 3:14, John 16:8-11)

ARTICLE THREE – STRUCTURAL DOCTRINE

Section 1. Sanctification

Every believer is promised positional, transforming and ultimate sanctification. (Philippians 1:6, Hebrews 10:10, 14, John 17:15-17; Ephesians 5:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 1 John 3:2-1; 1 Corinthians 6:11)

Section 2. Assurance

All who are born of the Spirit through faith in Christ, can have assurance of salvation and are eternally secure in Christ. (Romans 5:1; 1 John 5:13; John 10:27-29, 17:12; 2 Timothy 1:12; Ephesians 4:30; John 6:37)

Section 3. Church

The church is composed of all believers. It is the body and bride of Christ, formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and existing in two aspects, universal and local. The universal church is an elect company of believers, baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body. Its mission is to witness to its Head, Jesus Christ, preaching the Gospel among all the nations. It will be caught up to meet the Lord, after which He will return to set up His kingdom.

The local church is a group of believers voluntarily joined together in love and fellowship to worship God with praise and thanksgiving, bringing glory to Jesus Christ. The church does this through calling the lost to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ by preaching and sharing the Gospel, discipling believers, teaching sound doctrine, exercising spiritual gifts, serving the community and living according to His precepts.

St. Simons Community Church is evangelical, denominationally unrelated and rooted uncompromisingly in its foundational doctrines. (Article 2, Sections 1-6)

Section 4. Gifts

We believe that every believer has at least one spiritual gift sovereignly given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11). Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities for service, i.e., "for the equipping of the saints for the work of

service to the building up of one body of Christ.” (Ephesians 1:16; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10, Romans 12:1-8)

Also, we recognize that some brothers and sisters in Christ, including some in this body, believe in what are commonly known as revelatory gifts and sign gifts (e.g., speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, prophesying, apostleship, word of wisdom, word of knowledge). Whether or not these gifts are still operable today is a question and subject over which evangelical scholars of comparable scholarship and spirituality line up on opposite sides. Therefore, for the sake of unity amongst diversity, we, as a body, will not practice the use of revelatory and sign gifts or instruct concerning the subject in our public worship. We believe that in accordance with the sovereign will of God that miracles and healing are available through the prayers of believers. (James 5:14)

Section 5. Christian Life

5.1 Christians are called to a holy life of service, worship, and testimony in the power of the Holy Spirit, which service includes the propagation of the gospel message to the whole world. There is promised reward in eternity for faithfulness in such service. (1 Peter 1:15-16; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 3:12-17; John 14:1-3)

5.2 We believe the term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive relationship as delineated in scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe sexual intimacy is a gift from God intended only for a man and woman who are married to one another (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 3:14). We believe that God has established marriage as a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman and that all intimate sexual activity outside the marriage relationship, whether heterosexual or homosexual is prohibited by God (Genesis 2:24-25; Exodus 20:14, 17, 22:19; Leviticus 18:22-23, 20:13, 15-16; Matthew 19:4-6, 9; Romans 1:18-31; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 15-20; 1 Timothy 1:8-11; Jude 7). We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of SSCC as a local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to SSCC members, and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by SSCC, in any capacity, and her members agree to abide by this statement on marriage.

5.3 Sanctity of Human Life. We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition through natural death. We are therefor called to defend, protect and value all human life. (Psalm 139).

Section 6. Ordinances

The Bible sets forth two ordinances, the Lord’s Supper and Water Baptism. The Lord’s Supper is to be celebrated regularly in remembrance of Christ’s death on the cross, and in expectation of His return. Water Baptism is an outward testimony of a person’s belief in Christ. Immersion is the ideal means set forth in scripture. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:12, 8:36-38, 9:18, 10:47; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Section 7. Angels

Angels were originally created holy, but because of Satan’s rebellion, there is also an unholy angelic kingdom. (Colossians 1:16, Job 38:6-7; Psalm 148:2-5; Jude 6; Matthew 25:41; Ephesians 6:11-12; 1 Timothy 5:21; Revelation 12:9)

Section 8. God’s Program for the Ages

God has revealed different stewardships or ages with corresponding rules of life, of which the present is the stewardship of grace. We affirm that in the divine plan of salvation, the basis of salvation in every age is the

death of Christ, the requirement for salvation in every age is faith, the object of faith in every age is God, the content of faith changes in the various ages. (Ephesians 3:2-6, 3:9-11; Colossians 1:25-27; Romans 6:14; Hebrews 7:18-19)

Section 9. Second Coming

The blessed hope of the church is the imminent return of Christ. The events of the return of Christ take place in the following order: the rapture of the church, the tribulation, the second advent, the establishment of the reign of Christ on earth for one thousand years, and finally the eternal state of punishment for the unsaved and the eternal state of blessing for the elect. (Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18, 5:4-10; John 14:1-3; Matthew 24:21, 24:29-30, 25:31-46; Revelation 3:10, 20:1-6, 20:11-15)

ARTICLE FOUR – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Definition

Membership in a local church was the expected and local response upon becoming a part of the body of Christ. It is the divinely authorized organization for facilitating the Great Commission. It is presupposed by all the New Testament epistles and the very purpose of the Christian life warrants a meaningful (i.e., participatory) membership in worship, spiritual service, accountability and fellowship. (Hebrews 13:17; Revelation 1-2; 1 Timothy 3:15)

Section 2. Types of Membership

- a. Regular membership includes members of the church who have the usual privileges and responsibility of church membership. Those who are considered regular attendees are seen as de facto members. A formal roll of members will be maintained.
- b. Associate membership includes members who have the usual privileges and responsibility of church membership, with the exception of holding appointed office. Such membership is for those who desire to fellowship with us while retaining regular membership in another church. Any person holding an associate membership will be removed from the church roll when he moves from the area.

Section 3. Reception of Members

The main requirements for membership in the local church include agreeing with and adhering to the Foundational Doctrines delineated in Article 2, Section 1-6 of this constitution and willingness to abide by SSCC's Structural Doctrines as delineated in Article 3, Sections 1-9.

Prospective members may present themselves for membership in the church upon a profession of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and trusting in Him alone for salvation. All applicants for membership shall make a written statement of their faith in Christ, of their agreement with the Foundational Doctrines, and of their purpose to strive, with God's help, to live a life consistent with their profession of faith in Him. After hearing the testimony and reviewing the membership application of a prospective member, he/she may be voted into church membership by the Board of Elders (or temporary Executive Committee if the Elder Board of three is not yet established). It is desirable (but not required) for believers to be baptized as a means of identification with Christ. This can be done on request after becoming a member.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

- a. **Transfer.** Members in good standing shall be granted on written request a letter of transfer to an evangelical church of their choice. At the discretion of the Elders, members who move from the St. Simons area will be removed from membership.
- b. **Dismissal.** God's Word enjoins upon the church the duty of exercising discipline over its membership. The Board of Elders, after due biblical process of discipline, may remove from the membership of the church, any member who departs from his previously expressed agreement with the doctrinal statement, or who evidences a continued, unrepentant departure from biblical morality. Such a member shall be contacted before he may be dismissed. The Board may also remove from membership anyone who clearly manifests disinterest and inactivity in the life of the church.
- c. **Withdrawal.** Any member may make a written request to withdraw from membership.

Section 5. Covenant of Membership

Faith — I have received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and have assurance of my salvation.

Doctrine — I have read the Constitution of St. Simons Community Church, and I believe and accept its Foundational Doctrines, standards and purposes. With the Lord's help I will endeavor to do the following:

- **Fellowship** — Attend regularly the services of my church.
- **Prayer** — Pray for my fellow members, church leaders, church ministries, and the missionaries and missionary endeavors that the church supports.
- **Support** — Be a steward and invest in the support of my church and its projects.
- **Service** — Seek to be a blessing to others by using the spiritual gifts the Lord has given me and by assuming an active responsibility in the program of the church.
- **Unity** — Guard my tongue from destructive criticism and gossip, submit to discipline of this church, and work for the good of all members, thus pleasing the Head of the church, our blessed Lord.

ARTICLE FIVE – MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular Meetings

The regular services of the church shall include worship services each Lord's day morning.

Section 2. Annual Report

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31. Within the first 60 days of the close of the fiscal year, the SSCC staff shall provide an annual report. This report shall present the church budget for the ensuing year, as well as provide a report of church's activities for the previous year. SSCC will not conduct an annual meeting.

Section 3. Called Meeting

Special business meetings of the congregation may be called by the Pastor or the Board of Elders. Notice of such meeting shall be given from the pulpit at least three regular meetings covering a period of two Sundays prior to the called meeting.

Section 4. Parliamentary Procedure

In business meetings, any parliamentary question not covered by this constitution shall be decided by the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

ARTICLE SIX – GOVERNMENT

Section 1. Spiritual Leadership

This church acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as its head; the Holy Scriptures as the infallible guide in the matter of faith, church order and discipline; and the Holy Spirit as its teacher; and is neither accountable to nor under the jurisdiction or supervision of any other ecclesiastical body.

Section 2. Executive Authority

- a. Executive authority in spiritual and material matters is vested by the congregation in the Board of Elders. (1Timothy 5:17)
- a. The Board of Elders has the power to delegate to individuals or to committees or organizations, the right to transact any of their business or to exercise any of their powers, but the exercise of such delegation shall be subject to the supervision and control of the Board of Elders.

Section 3. Interim Leadership

In the event at least three men qualified as elders, according to the biblical standards, cannot be found in the assembly, an executive committee shall be formed of not less than three and not more than nine men who most closely approximate the biblical qualifications for elders. These leaders will be appointed by the congregation and will relinquish their duties to a duly qualified Board of Elders as soon as three or more such elders are installed by the executive committee and recognized by the congregation.

ARTICLE SEVEN – LEADERSHIP & OFFICERS

The leadership of St. Simons Community Church shall be the Board of Elders which shall include the Pastor and Co-Pastor.

Section 1. The Pastor

The duties of the Pastor or Co-Pastor shall be to preach the gospel, supervise the administration of the ordinances and exercise pastoral oversight of the church. The Pastor or Co-Pastor shall act as an ex-officio member of the organizations and committees of the church and shall suggest appointments of such committees as may be necessary. The Pastor or Co-Pastor shall supervise the remunerated church staff.

Section 2. The Pastor's Staff

The church staff will be selected by the Pastor or Co-Pastor and the Board of Elders at a duly-called meeting of the officers of the church. The church staff shall not be officers of the church.

Section 3. The Board of Elders

- a. Election.** The Board of Elders shall consist of a number of members determined by the Board itself. Each elder shall serve a minimum term of three years, but may be extended by unanimous vote of the Board of Elders.
- b. Qualifications of Elders.** In order to accomplish the duties of the Board of Elders, the elders must be men who meet the qualifications described in 1Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. An elder will be subject to scrutiny not only in the areas which might require discipline as an ordinary member, but also as to his continued meeting of the qualifications for eldership. When an elder ceases to meet these qualifications, he shall be asked by the elders to step aside for a time so that he may put his life in order, or he may be asked to resign. An elder may also desire to be relieved from office either temporarily or permanently, if he feels unable to serve for any reason. Possible reinstatement at a later time will be determined by the remaining elders according to sound wisdom.
- c. Organization.** The first meeting of the fiscal year, the Board of Elders shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer. Any elder may hold more than one office, except that the same person may not hold the office of chairman and secretary. The treasurer of the church does not have to be an elder. As soon as possible after election of officers, it shall also elect from its members, individuals or committees to represent it in the oversight of the varied spiritual activities of the church.
- d. Duties.** The Board of Elders have executive authority in all spiritual matters of the church. The Board of Elders shall assist the Pastor in observance of the Lord's Supper. The chairman of the Board of Elders or someone designated by him shall act as moderator over all congregational meetings.
- e. Meetings of Elders.** Notice of regular meetings of the elders shall be given to each elder at least five days in advance. When an emergency meeting is required, the previous stipulation may be deemed to be fulfilled when all of the elders (including those not present for the emergency meeting) have signed a waiver of notice to this effect (or have given verbal assent until the waiver can be signed).

All matters before the Board of Elders will be determined by a prayerful and unanimous agreement of the elders present. The sole exception to this principle shall be in matters of the salary or discipline of the pastor or co-pastor or the members of his immediate family. In such a case, the elder in question must abstain. A simple majority of the elders of the church shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE EIGHT – COMMITTEES

Section 1. Budget Committee

- a. Membership.** The Budget Committee shall be composed of the church treasurer, a representative of the Board of Elders and such persons from the congregation deemed necessary by the Board of Elders.
- b. Duties.** The Budget Committee shall prepare a proposed budget which will be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting.

Section 2. Pulpit Committee

- a. Membership.** When a pastor resigns or is dismissed by the congregation, a pulpit committee shall be formed as follows:
 - 1. Representatives of the Board of Elders (or Executive Committee).
 - 2. Other persons from the congregation appointed by the Board of Elders.
- c. Term of Office.** This committee shall function until a new pastor has come to serve the church.

d. Duties. The committee shall seek a suitable leader to be presented to the congregation for its consideration as provided in Article Seven, Section 1. The method presenting a candidate to the congregation shall be determined by the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE NINE – AMENDMENTS

If it does not infringe upon the doctrinal principle of this church, this constitution may be altered, amended, or repealed and a new constitution may be adopted by the elders at any regular meeting or at any special meeting, if at least two days written notice is given to each elder by the elder requesting a change. A unanimous vote of the full Board of Elders is required for the approval of any proposed change to the Constitution or Bylaws.