

**Constitution
Valley Mills Christian Church
Indianapolis, IN**

Preamble

- I. We believe and teach that the New Testament is the constitution of this Christian Church and is the authoritative norm for this divine institution. This constitution is designed to act as a guide to the congregation for our fundamental beliefs and a basis for conducting its affairs.
- II. All situations not covered by this constitution shall be dealt with by the Elders

Article 1: Name and Address

- I. The name of this church shall be Valley Mills Christian Church ("church") of Marion County, Indiana. It is incorporated as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization under the laws of Indiana.
- II. The address of the church is 5555 Kentucky Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46221
- III. The church also owns property at the corner of Heartland Boulevard and County Line Road in the Heartland Crossing community with a legal description as follows: The Settlement at Heartland Crossing, Lot 62, Parcel # 055-02-28-235-001-000

Article 2: Purpose

- I. To fulfill its mission in the world as we find it ordained in the sacred constitution of the New Testament.
- II. To preach the Gospel of salvation to the world, so Jesus may draw all men unto Him, even as He said, to receive into its peculiar fellowship Christian converts of this Gospel.
- III. To exalt Christ so members may be changed into His image.
- IV. To promote and support spiritual growth of the congregation.
- V. To promote and support missionary and benevolent works.

Article 3: Associations

- I. This congregation shall, under no circumstances ever surrender, by merger, absorption, or otherwise its historical independent and uniquely non-denominational position in Christendom. The church shall govern its own internal affairs in accordance with the New Testament without interference by any outside authority so long as this congregation does not violate any statute of the State of Indiana or the United States of America.
- II. This membership is made up of Christians only, with no earthly denominational affiliation.

Article 4: Statement of Religious Authority/Faith

- I. The Bible itself, as the 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 and practice. The church shall use the New Testament of the Bible as the final authority concerning the proper conduct of the church and its congregation.

- II. In order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, all church staff, non-staff, elders, deacons, officers, ministry leaders and members shall acknowledge their acceptance of and agreement with the church's statements of religious authority in this Article. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22).
- III. Statements of Religious Faith
- a. **The Bible** - We believe that the Bible is God's Word. It was written by men who were inspired by God and led by His Spirit. Therefore, it is accurate, authoritative, and applicable to our everyday lives. (2 Timothy 3:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21)
 - b. **God** - We believe that there is only one eternal God who is the Creator of all things. He exists in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11, Luke 3:21-22)
 - c. **Jesus** - We believe that Jesus is the one and only Son of God. He was with God at the beginning and was born into this world through the Virgin Mary. He is both God and man. Because of His sinlessness and sacrificial death on the cross, He is the only one who can reconcile us to God, and assures us victory in this life. (John 1:1-2, 14; Philippians 2:5-8; Luke 1:26-38; Hebrews 7:26; Acts 2:22-24; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 1:9-11)
 - d. **The Holy Spirit** - We believe that the Holy Spirit dwells within every Christian and provides the power for living a life that pleases God. We also believe that the Spirit gives gifts accordingly so that the body of Christ might be built up into full maturity. (John 14:25-26; John 16:12-15; Acts 1:4, 8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; Ephesians 5:18)
 - e. **Mankind** - We believe that all people are created in the image of God to have fellowship with Him but because of their sin and rebellion they became alienated from God. Therefore, a person is incapable of regaining a right relationship with God through his or her own effort alone. (Genesis 1:27; Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - f. **Salvation** - We believe that the blood of Jesus Christ provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sin. Therefore, only those who truly place their faith in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross will be saved. Salvation is a free gift and cannot be earned. Those who trust in Jesus Christ are to repent of their sins, confess their belief in Him, and follow the Lord in Christian baptism (immersion). (John 3:16; Romans 10:13-15; Galatians 3:26-27; Acts 2:37-38; Acts 22:16; Matthew 28:19-20)
 - g. **The Christian Life** - We believe that all Christians should live for Christ and not for themselves. By obeying God's commands as found in the Bible and by yielding daily to the Spirit of God, every believer should mature and be conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:20-26; 2:1-7; John 14:23-24; Romans 12:1-3)
 - h. **Eternity** - We believe that those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ will live eternally with God (heaven), and that those who have not placed their faith in Jesus will live eternally without God (hell). (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20; 20:1-15; 21:8)
 - i. **The Church** - We believe that the church is the body of Christ, of which Jesus Christ is the head. The purpose of the church is to glorify God by loving Him and by making Him known to the lost world. We gather each Lord's Day, as did the early church for the purposes of study, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. We also live out our faith during the week that God may be glorified and people may see Christ in us. (Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 20:7)
 - j. **Marriage** - 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) We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as seen in Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-25)
 - i. Any marriage ceremony performed on Valley Mills Christian Church property or presided over by our church staff or elders will be of one man and of one woman.

No other ceremonies shall be performed on our property or presided over by our staff or Elders. No other marriage ceremony other than a marriage union between a man and a woman shall be permitted or recognized as acceptable or honorable in the sight of God.

- IV. Statements of Final Authority for Matters of Faith and Conduct and of Adherence
- a. The statements of faith are not intended as a creed and do not exhaust the extent of our beliefs.
 - b. For purposes of the church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Eldership and senior minister are the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.
 - c. In the event the matter of interpretation deals with the faith, practice, or act or omission of the senior minister, then the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application in that context shall be the Eldership.

Article 5: Congregational Leadership

- I. Staff, Ministerial and Paid Administrative
- a. Selection process
 - i. For ministerial staff whose primary role is to teach from the pulpit
 1. The Elders shall act as a committee to recommend candidates for all ministerial positions to the congregation for approval.
 2. The final selection of ministerial staff shall be approved by at least a 75% vote of the congregational membership at a congregational business meeting.
 - ii. For all other ministerial and paid administrative staff
 1. The Senior Minister along with the Elders, shall hire candidates for these positions.
 - b. Qualifications, duties, responsibilities, job descriptions, and compensation packages for each paid employee are addressed in the Employee Handbook and Compensation Plan documents.
 - c. Discipline/Removal
 - i. Employee discipline policy is outlined in the Employee Handbook.
 - ii. When, in the opinion of 75% of the total number of Elders, the interest of the congregation can best be served by a change of any Minister, the Elders shall arrange a meeting with that person, at which time their differences/concerns shall be thoroughly discussed.
 - iii. In the event no solution can be reached in their conference with that person, the Elders may request, in writing, his or her resignation.
 - iv. Should this action result in no agreement within a week, the matter shall be resolved in an Eldership meeting to be held as soon as possible.
 - v. The Elders shall give in writing a notice of release to that person.
 1. The duration of the severance shall be determined by the Elders.
- II. Elders – the scriptural officers of this congregation shall consist of Elders.
- a. Qualifications – As described in **1 Timothy 3:1-7** and **Titus 1: 6-9** and shall be members of the church.
 - b. Selection process – the Elders whose terms have not expired shall act as a nominating committee for the annual election of Elders and shall post said nominations at least two weeks prior to the annual congregational business meeting. Although the Elders encourage congregational input, all nominations shall be made by the Elders. The election of Elders will take place at the annual business meeting by at least a 75% vote of congressional members present.

- c. Number – the number of serving Elders shall be according to the need and/or availability of qualified men, but in no event shall be fewer than three (3).
- d. Terms of service – three (3) years with a minimum of one year of sabbatical rest time before serving an additional term, with the exception of the senior minister, who can serve consecutive terms and the Chairman of the Elders, who can serve one additional year for transitional purposes.
- e. Each year the serving Elders shall nominate a serving elder to serve the role of Chairman of the Elders. The final selection of the Chairman of the Elders shall be a majority vote by the serving Elders.
- f. Elder Duties/Responsibilities
 - i. Oversee the spiritual interest of the church by holding fast to the Word of God as it is written in the Bible.
 - ii. Oversee the observance of the Lord's Supper
 - iii. Provide for pulpit supply if necessary in the absence of the Senior Minister
 - iv. The Elders shall act as a nominating committee to recommend candidates to the congregation for approval for all ministerial positions whose primary role is to preach from the pulpit.
 - v. Oversee all aspects of Christian education.
 - vi. Advice and counsel for the entire ministerial and non-ministerial staff and hold the ministerial staff to strict doctrinal adherence.
 - vii. The Eldership shall act as the official board of administration
 - viii. Removal of paid staff
- g. Discipline - discipline should follow the biblical pattern as set out in [Matthew 18:15-20](#), [Galatians 6:1-2](#), and [Titus 3:10-11](#).
- h. Removal
 - i. When, in the opinion of 75% of the total number of Elders, the interest of the congregation can best be served by a change of any Elder, the Elders shall arrange a meeting with that person, at which time their differences/concerns shall be thoroughly discussed.
 - ii. In the event no solution can be reached in their conference with that person, the Elders may request, in writing, his resignation.
 - iii. Should this action result in no agreement within a week, the matter shall be resolved in an Eldership meeting to be held as soon as possible where the 75% vote shall rule final disposition.

III. Deacons

- a. Qualifications – As described in [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#) and [Titus 1: 6-9](#) and shall be members of the church.
- b. Selection process – the Elders shall nominate the deacons and shall make the final selection.
- c. Terms of service – maximum three (3) years with a minimum of one year of sabbatical rest time before serving an additional term.
- d. Deacon Duties/Responsibilities
 - i. The deacons shall cooperate with the Elders to support the operational and spiritual interest of the church. The responsibilities and duties of the deacons shall be under the direction of the Elders.
- e. Discipline - discipline should follow the biblical pattern as set out in [Matthew 18:15-20](#), [Galatians 6:1-2](#), and [Titus 3:10-11](#).
- f. Removal
 - i. When, in the opinion of 75% of the total number of Elders, the interest of the congregation can best be served by a change of any Deacon, the Elders shall arrange a meeting with that person, at which time their differences/concerns shall be thoroughly discussed.

- ii. In the event no solution can be reached in their conference with that person, the Elders may request, in writing, his resignation.
 - iii. Should this action result in no agreement within a week, the matter shall be resolved in an Eldership meeting to be held as soon as possible where the 75% vote shall rule final disposition.
- IV. Trustees: The office of Trustee is a required office by the state of Indiana.
 - a. The number of Trustees shall be not less than two (2) or more than three (3).
 - b. Qualifications—shall be members of the church and shall be geographically available to support the needs of the church.
 - c. Selection process – the current serving Elders shall act as a nominating committee for the annual election of Trustees and shall post said nominations at least two weeks prior to the annual congregational business meeting. Although the Elders encourage congregational input, all nominations for the selection of Trustees shall be made by the Elders. The election of the Trustees will take place at the annual business meeting by a majority vote of congressional members present.
 - d. Terms of service – three (3) years
 - e. Trustees Duties/Responsibilities
 - i. Exercise the corporate powers of the church under the direction and control of the Elders, including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Exercise, on behalf of the church, all legal documents
 - 2. Maintain a safe deposit box for all important papers
 - ii. Discharge such other duties as the laws of the state of Indiana require.
 - f. Removal
 - i. When, in the opinion of 75% of the total number of Elders, the interest of the congregation can best be served by a change of any Trustee, the Elders shall arrange a meeting with that person, at which time their differences/concerns shall be thoroughly discussed.
 - ii. In the event no solution can be reached in their conference with that person, the Elders may request, in writing, his resignation.
 - iii. Should this action result in no agreement within a week, the matter shall be resolved in an Eldership meeting to be held as soon as possible where the 75% vote shall rule final disposition.
- V. Other Leaders
 - a. Qualifications – shall be members of the church.
 - b. Selection process – The Elders and/or staff shall assign other leaders in ministry areas as the need or opportunity arises.
 - c. Duties/Responsibilities
 - i. As defined by the Elders and/or staff for their specific area of leadership
 - d. Discipline/Removal - discipline will be handled through the staff and/or Elders.

Article 6: Church Membership

- I. Qualifications
 - a. Anyone who has “put on Christ” by immersion as recorded in the New Testament scriptures and has completed a membership information class.
 - b. Members of the church must recognize the religious faiths defined by Article 4 of this constitution and agree to conduct affairs concerning the church as described by this constitution.
- II. Discipline

- a. The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Cor 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Tim 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 (Gal 6:1).
- b. 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. This discipline is entrusted to the Eldership and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11.
- c. Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Pastoral Staff and/or Elders, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is divisive to the body, may be subject to church discipline.
- d. Discipline will follow the said biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the church from unrepentant sin.
- e. An individual may be disciplined by the Eldership short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry).
- f. The Eldership, as is required by Scripture, may report to the congregation the names of those who have lost membership by reason of church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18:15-20.
- g. Membership is voluntary and may be terminated at the member's request.
- h. Membership may also be terminated as a form of discipline as per the above-described process.

III. Removal

- a. When, in the opinion of 75% of the total number of Elders, the interest of the congregation can best be served by removal of a member, the Elders shall arrange a meeting with that person, at which time their differences/concerns shall be thoroughly discussed.
- b. In the event no solution can be reached in their conference with that person, the Elders may request that member to terminate their membership.
- c. Should this action result in no agreement within a week, the matter shall be resolved in an Eldership meeting to be held as soon as possible where the 75% vote shall rule final disposition.
- d. Upon removal from membership, an individual will not be allowed to participate in any church related activities until meeting with the Elders to define a restoration plan.

Article 7: Financial Affairs

- I. The church's fiscal year begins in January and ends in December
- II. The church utilizes a financial committee to oversee the financial affairs of the church
 - a. Qualifications – Shall be members of the church with knowledge in business finance, accounting, or other fiscal activity.
 - b. Selection – the financial committee shall be appointed annually by the elders and shall exist of the following:
 - i. Two (2) current Elders
 - ii. Church treasurer
 - iii. Church assistant treasurer
 - iv. Senior Minister

- c. Duties and Responsibilities
 - i. Prepare financial reporting as required
 - ii. Submit fiscal year budget to Elders for approval
 - iii. Oversee monthly management of income and expenses
- III. Budget planning and approval
 - a. Budget preparation occurs in the final six (6) months of the preceding fiscal year.
 - b. Elders, paid staff, and other ministry leaders may provide budget consideration requests to the financial committee for consideration into the next fiscal year's budget
 - c. The financial committee will prepare a proposed budget, including data of current year giving/income and giving/income projections that will be submitted to the Elders for majority vote.
 - d. The ultimate approval of the fiscal budget will be by majority vote by members at a congregational business meeting, typically held in December of the preceding fiscal year.
- IV. Any increase in the total annual budget must be approved by the Elders and the congregation.
- V. An account of all General Fund receipts and expenditures shall be maintained.
- VI. The missions fund shall be transferred weekly to a separate account administered by the Missions Department.
- VII. Any expense exceeding a purchase agent's approved threshold that is outside of a normal fixed, budgeted, or designated funds expense of the church shall not be paid without the approval of the Elders, who must ensure funds are available.
- VIII. The record books shall be submitted for third party audit or review at the end of the year.
- IX. Detailed, accurate, confidential records of contributions and church offerings are to be maintained. Individual statements of offerings and contributions are to be provided to the giver by January 31 of the following year.
- X. Staff salary increases must be brought before the Elders for consideration as part of the budget planning and approval process.
- XI. Members may request a copy of the published annual budget.
- XII. All financial transactions should reflect the church's tax exempt status; agents making purchases on behalf of the church are responsible for ensuring this status.

Article 8: Meetings and Elections

- I. Congregational Business Meetings
 - a. The election of officers shall be held at the annual congregational business meeting each year. This election shall select Elders and Trustees.
 - b. Special congregational business meetings can be called upon the recommendation of the Elders.
 - c. Only member over eighteen (18) years of age shall be allowed to vote in congressional business meetings.
 - d. At any congregational business meeting a majority vote of those members present shall be sufficient to pass a measure.
 - e. Due notice of congregational business meetings must be given before any business can be transacted.
 - i. Due notice for a congregational business meeting is considered to be an announcement from the pulpit at the morning worship services for two consecutive weeks.

Article 9: Church Programs

- I. Church programs shall be approved by the staff and Elders and adhere to the Ministry Alignment Plan

Article 10: Property

- I. The Eldership shall have no power to buy, sell, lease or mortgage any real property of the "church" valued in an amount equal to or exceeding twenty percent (20%) of the "church's" then-current annual budget without congregational approval.
- II. Final Dissolution. In the event that Church should permanently dissolve, the remaining assets shall be disposed of at the direction of the Eldership of the "church" with preference given to donating the assets to a faithful Restoration Movement organization (which shall be an entity exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954).

Article 12: Adoption and Amendments

- I. This constitution/by-laws shall be adopted upon 75% approval from the members at a congregational business meeting, provided a 30 day notice of the proposed change is made available to the members.
- II. This constitution may be modified by a seventy-five percent vote of active members attending a congregational business meeting, provided a 30 day notice of the proposed change is made available to the members.
- III. A copy of this constitution will be made available to all members of the church upon request.