



## ***CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS***

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of  
TRANSFORMATION CHURCH,  
Gainesville, Georgia

### **PREAMBLE**

Following the clear leadership of the Holy Spirit, in January 2022 a group of believers gathered to begin forming Transformation Church in the Eastern area of Hall County, Georgia for the worship of God and the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We the members of Transformation Church, do hereby adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of, and bring glory to, Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible.

### **ARTICLE I. NAME**

This body shall be known as Transformation Church, located in Eastern Hall County, Gainesville, Georgia.

### **ARTICLE II. AFFILIATIONS**

Insofar as it is Scriptural, this body will cooperate with and support the Chattahoochee Baptist Association of Churches, the Georgia Baptist Mission Board, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

### **ARTICLE III. MISSION STATEMENT**

Transformation Church exists to be a church where anyone can be transformed by the Truth of Jesus Christ.

### **ARTICLE IV. PURPOSE**

The Purpose of Transformation Church is to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and to live out the Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40).

## **ARTICLE V. CHARACTER**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers (members) who compose it. This church will be, and is always to be a sovereign, autonomous church, self-governing on all matters by a majority of the body of members who compose it and recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist Churches. In no way is this to be understood that such cooperation, or affiliation shall ever become one of the doctrines and/or tenets of this church.

## **ARTICLE VI. ARTICLES OF FAITH**

The Holy Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant, sufficient and authoritative Word of God. It is the basis of our faith. This church accepts "The Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000. The church is a committed body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ and is committed to personally sharing the Good News of salvation to all mankind. This statement does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. Our beliefs are defined by the Truth of the Bible. The Bible speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the behavior of mankind. For purposes of our faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, our Pastoral Staff and Pastoral Advisory Team have final interpretive authority over the Bible's meaning and application.

## **ARTICLE VII. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

We believe the word "marriage" in accordance with Scripture means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word "spouse" refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or wife. Marriages outside of these parameters will not be performed by church ministers or on church property.

Marriage is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

#### **ARTICLE VIII. HUMAN LIFE**

We affirm the clear teaching of Scripture that all life is sacred, including pre-born children, the aged, mentally or physically challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception until natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect and affirm human life at all stages.

#### **ARTICLE IX. GENDER**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably created each human with a pre-determined gender corresponding to human biology. Scripture clearly teaches that there are only two genders. Each of these two genders reflect the image and nature of Holy God. Genesis 1:26-27.

#### **ARTICLE X. CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led by the Holy Spirit of God to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and, upon the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We will strive therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of the Gospel in evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, service and worship. We will strive to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through the nations. In case of difference of opinion in the church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We will strive to maintain family and personal devotions; to teach our children the Holy Scriptures. We will prayerfully seek the salvation of our friends and family, to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just and faithful in our behavior; to be kind to all. We will strive to love God and love others.

We further promise to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the weaknesses of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation according to Matthew 18.

If we leave the northeast Georgia area, as soon as possible we will unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **ARTICLE XI. GOVERNANCE**

The governance of this church is vested in the body of believers (members) who compose it. This is an autonomous Baptist Church operating under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the importance of mutual counsel and cooperation with other church bodies.

## **ARTICLE XII. MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1. Admission**

The process for becoming a member of Transformation Church shall be as follows:

(1) New members may be received upon:

- (a) public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, expressed in baptism by immersion and completion of "We Are Transformation" class.
- (b) transfer of membership from another Baptist church, by letter of recommendation and completion of "We Are Transformation" class.
- (c) transfer of membership from a church of a different denomination, but of like faith and order and completion of "We Are Transformation" class. Like faith and order will be at the sole discretion of Lead Pastor and Pastoral Staff.
- (d) statement and evidence that the prospective member has previously been a member of a church of like doctrine and completion of "We Are Transformation" class.
- (e) restoration after church discipline.

(2) The prospective member must submit to the covenant and Constitution of Transformation Church and forfeits his or her membership(s) in any other ecclesiastical body.

### **Section 2. Rights and Responsibilities**

Each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in, and contribute to, the ministry and life of this body, consistent with God's leading and with the time, talents and material resources each has received from God.

Only members of this congregation shall be entitled to serve in leadership positions of this church. Non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis only with the approval of the Pastoral Staff. It is the privilege and responsibility of all members to attend business meetings and cast their vote on congregational resolutions and recommendations.

### **Section 3. Discipline**

It is the duty of members of the body of Christ to correct one another with regards to unrepentant sin. Redemption, rather than punishment, should be the guiding interest in this endeavor. Admonition should be made according to the guidelines set forth by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17. Therefore, church discipline should ordinarily be considered only after private admonition has failed.

The purpose of church discipline is twofold:

- (a) to encourage the erring member into seeking repentance from God, and
- (b) to guard the witness and spiritual welfare of the congregation as a whole.

Church discipline may include, but is not limited to,

- (a) rebuke by the pastoral staff, deacon body, or the congregation;
- (b) exclusion from the celebration of the Lord's Supper;
- (c) deposition from church office; and/or
- (d) termination of membership, according to 1 Corinthians 5:6-7.

Termination of membership for reason of discipline must be decided by a three-fourths majority vote of the congregation.

In order to be restored to membership, the person who is being disciplined must

- (a) request to be restored,
- (b) show sufficient evidence of repentance, by confession and reformation, and
- (c) be received back into membership by a three-fourths majority vote.

Transformation Church shall not grant a letter of transfer to another church for any member that has been terminated by church discipline.

The Pastoral Staff and Pastoral Advisory Team of Transformation Church shall have final authority in all matters of church governance as set forth and described in this document.

### **Section 4. Termination**

This body shall dismiss from its membership

- (a) those members who die,
- (b) those who unite with another ecclesiastical body,
- (c) those who make a written or oral request for termination of their membership,
- (d) those whose membership has been discovered to have been fraudulently obtained,  
or
- (e) those whose membership is terminated as an act of church discipline.

## **Section 5. Designation**

"Active members" are defined as those members who are faithful to the church covenant and are active in worship and giving at Transformation Church.

Members who are unable to attend due to missions service, chronic health conditions, military service, or education may be considered active members of the church.

"Inactive members" are defined as those who either (a) have failed to attend any worship service at Transformation Church for at least ten months, or (b) are actively attending another church, but have not transferred their membership to said church.

"Non-resident members" are those members who are hindered from regular attendance because of mission's service, military service, or education.

"Resident members" are all other members.

## **ARTICLE XIII. MEETINGS**

### **Section 1. Worship Services**

Worship services shall be held every Sunday according to the purposes of the church (as stated in Article IV. Purpose). These may be in-person or online meetings when circumstances necessitate. The Lead Pastor, or his designee, shall be responsible for leading these services.

### **Section 2. Business Meetings**

25% of active members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. A member must be present in the designated meeting location in order to cast a vote. Use of proxy or absentee voting is prohibited. Inactive members (as defined in Art. VII., Sect. 5) shall not be permitted to vote in a business meeting.

All decisions shall be tallied by the number of votes cast; abstentions shall not be considered in the tally.

Church business meetings shall be guided by *Roberts Rules of Order*, except where those rules conflict with this Constitution. The Lead Pastor, or his designee, shall serve as Moderator for all business meetings.

#### **Sub-Section 2A. Business Meetings**

This body shall meet for business matters as deemed necessary by the Pastoral Staff. The church will be given one week's notice prior to any business meeting. The fourth quarter meeting shall include the presentation of a Ministry Plan (budget) for the upcoming calendar year by the Church Treasurer and Pastoral Staff to be voted on during the business meeting.

Votes conducted during regular business meetings will be determined by simple majority of those members present and voting, unless otherwise prescribed by this Constitution.

- (1) A quarterly financial report shall be prepared by the Church Treasurer.
- (2) Other ministry teams shall offer reports, as necessary.
- (3) The Moderator may call upon leaders of ministry teams and special projects to report

### **Sub-Section 2B. Special Business Meetings**

A special business meeting may be called by the Lead Pastor, Moderator, or Pastoral Advisory Team. Notice of at least one-week shall be given to the membership prior to the special business meeting, unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. A quorum of at least 25% of active members shall be required for the transaction of a special business meeting. Business shall be limited only to those items announced prior to the meeting. A simple majority is required for decisions in a special business meeting.

### **Section 3. Business Conduct**

Members shall conduct themselves with a spirit of Christian love and charity in all meetings, especially when they disagree. It shall be understood that Transformation Church is governed by God and the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

## **ARTICLE XIV. ORDINANCES**

### **Section 1. Baptism**

Baptism is a symbolic act of obedience, representing a believer's new life in Christ. Baptism shall be conducted by a member of the pastoral staff, or a designee approved by the Lead Pastor, and shall be performed by complete immersion in water.

In most cases, a person applying for baptism will simultaneously be seeking church membership. For those individuals that do not wish to become a member of Transformation Church, the Lead Pastor, or his designee, will counsel with the individual to ascertain his/her understanding of the ordinance and to encourage that person to join a Bible-teaching congregation as soon as possible.

It is a requirement for membership at Transformation Church to have undergone the ordinance of baptism by immersion, after one's decision to follow Christ.

## **Section 2. The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby a believer, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, commemorates the death of Jesus Christ and anticipates His second coming. The Lord's Supper shall be observed as determined by the Lead Pastor and Pastoral Staff. Only persons who have surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ shall be permitted to partake in the Lord's Supper. The Pastoral Staff, or designees will be responsible for making physical preparations for and administering the Lord's Supper.

## **ARTICLE XV. NON-PROFIT STATUS**

Transformation Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended, unless any law shall be repressive in scope and/or nature, that it is our duty to democratically oppose it on the basis of the right of free exercise of religious beliefs and peaceable assembly.

## **ARTICLE XVI. STAFF AND OFFICERS**

### **Section 1. Definition**

"Pastoral Staff" shall be defined as persons called by the church body to provide direction to the church's overall mission and various ministries—such as discipleship, evangelism, music, missions, youth, children, pastoral care, and others that the church may deem necessary.

Pastoral staff members are individuals whose professional experience, education, and/or personal faith qualifies them to be considered as ministers to this church family. All ministerial staff members shall be members of this church.

Administrative Staff, on the other hand, serve the role of supporting the ministries. Administrative staff members are not required to be members of Transformation Church, but they must be members in good standing of some church of like faith and practice.

### **Section 2. Lead Pastor**

We acknowledge that Transformation Church shall be led by the Lead Pastor and other Ministerial Staff. The day-to-day operations and managing of the church shall be the responsibility of the Lead Pastor.

#### **(A) Nomination**

Whenever a Lead Pastor vacancy occurs, a search committee shall be elected by the church to seek out and nominate as Lead Pastor, a minister of the Gospel whose Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office of Lead Pastor. The search committee shall bring only one name at a time for consideration and no nomination shall be made except that of the search committee.

The process for the formation of the Search Team shall be as follows: the team shall be made up of five members and one non-voting alternate. The members and alternate shall be selected by the Pastoral Staff and Pastoral Advisory Team. The Search Team shall be presented to the church for an official vote in a special called business meeting for that purpose. This shall be a standing vote and requires three-fourths majority to pass.

**(B) Call**

The call of the Lead Pastor shall be by standing vote. A call shall be issued upon a three-fourths majority vote of those members present and voting. Should the one recommended by the search committee fail to receive this vote or fail to accept the call, the meeting will be adjourned without debate and the search team shall seek out another nominee.

**(C) Duties**

The Lead Pastor shall have responsibility for the welfare and oversight of the church. He shall be the administrative head of the church and shall be responsible for casting the vision of the church and setting the overall direction of church programs. The Lead Pastor shall conduct worship services on regular and special occasions, performing the duties that usually pertain to his office, including, but not limited to:

- (1) preaching and teaching the Gospel of Christ,
- (2) administering the ordinances,
- (3) ministering to the members of the church and the community.

The Lead Pastor shall be an *ex-officio* member of all organizations, departments, councils and committees. He may call a special meeting of the deacons or any committee, organization, department, or council according to procedures which may be set forth in the by-laws.

The Lead Pastor shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church. He shall provide for pulpit supply when he is absent and arrange for workers to assist in revival meetings and other special services in cooperation with the deacons.

**Section 3: Pastoral Staff**

The church shall call and employ pastoral staff members as church ministries require. If the need or vacancy of a pastoral staff position shall arise, they shall be chosen upon the recommendation of the Lead Pastor and ministerial staff. Once the Lead Pastor and ministerial staff have selected a candidate for the position, the candidate will be presented to the church family for a vote of affirmation. This shall be a standing vote and requires a simple majority to affirm the call. Pastoral staff members shall serve until the relationship is terminated by resignation or by mutual agreement between the staff member and the Lead Pastor.

A job description shall be written when the need for a ministerial staff member is determined and shall be kept in the church office records. The general duties of all pastoral staff are to support the vision and direction of Transformation Church as set forth by the Lead Pastor and this Constitution.

#### **Section 4: Administrative Staff**

Administrative Staff shall be selected by the pastoral staff with the advice and counsel of the Ministry Advisory Team. All Administrative Staff shall be under the direction of the pastoral staff as designated by the Lead Pastor.

#### **Section 5: Moderator**

The Lead Pastor or his designee shall be the Moderator.

#### **Section 6: Church Clerk**

It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special business meetings of the church. The clerk along with the office staff shall see that a record of baptisms and new members is kept. Records should also include member addresses, date of admission, date of dismissal or death. The clerk along with the office staff shall issue letter of dismissals voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary as indicated by these bylaws.

#### **Section 7: Church Treasurer**

The Church Treasurer is responsible for recording all gifts to the church and overseeing disbursement. The Church Treasurer will have two other people, designated by the ministerial staff, to be back-up signers on all checks disbursed by the church. Church checks will require two signatures for any amount over \$5,000. The Treasurer shall provide weekly reports to the Pastoral Staff of cash on hand as well as upcoming expenses. The Treasurer shall monitor the payment of all accounts consistent with the Ministry Plan (budget) of the church and proper approval. The Treasurer shall keep records of individual contributions and furnish end of year documents of contributions to be distributed to members, in conjunction with the Assistant Treasurer.

#### **Section 9: Trustees**

The church shall have at least three trustees and shall be elected by the church after having been recommended by the Pastoral Staff. Trustees shall be the legal holding company of any real property of the church as made necessary by law. They shall be charged with administering the will of the church in all legal matters, but they shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action.

A regular term for a Trustee shall be five years. After serving a five-year term, at least one year must elapse before a Trustee is eligible for re-election.

Vacancies occurring in the Trustees for any reason shall be reported to the Pastoral Staff. The Pastoral Staff shall then recommend to the church a suitable person to fill such vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term.

The duties of the Trustees are:

1. The Trustees shall be legal representatives of the Church and as such they are given authority to execute deeds, debentures, mortgages, liens, and other legal documents for the church, but shall have no authority or privileges to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, etc. any property of the Church without approval of the Church.
2. The Trustees shall have supervision and maintain any deeds, bonds, insurance policies and important papers of the Church. They are further authorized to receive and disburse monies in accordance with terms of wills, bequests and special instruments wherein the church is named beneficiary.
3. The Trustees shall make a written report to the Church as needed and said report may be incorporated in any annual report.

### **Section 10: Pastoral Advisory Team (P.A.T)**

The Pastoral Advisory Team shall be made up of God-called and licensed and/or ordained ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These men will serve as an advisory and accountability team for our Lead Pastor.

#### 1. Requirements

All must be leaders in other respected congregations (or they must have been in the past). They must also have wisdom in handling the interests of the church and Lead Pastor, know and love Transformation Church, and her Lead Pastor. They may not be active members of Transformation Church. They must agree to make themselves available at their own expense to serve Transformation Church if requested and must be willing to provide spiritual protection to the church through prayer and by living an honorable Christian lifestyle.

#### 2. Biblical Qualifications for P.A.T.

"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.

(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap." (1 Timothy 3: 2-7)

### 3. Selection and Function of P.A.T.

The Pastoral Advisory Team will be invited by the Lead Pastor and confirmed by the Pastoral Staff. The Lead Pastor will be accountable to the Pastoral Advisory Team in the event of any alleged misconduct.

### 4. Installing New Members of P.A.T.

Each year the Lead Pastor may replace one (1) of the P.A.T. and enter that change into the minutes of a Trustees' meeting. If disciplinary action is being considered, changes in the P.A.T. may not be made until its work is completed.

## **Section 11: Security**

Security is a priority at Transformation Church. The church shall have a security coordinator who oversees the operations of the church ministries. This person shall be appointed by the Pastoral Staff and is responsible for setting policies and guidelines related to security.

## **ARTICLE XVII: CHURCH FINANCES**

### **Section 1: Member's Responsibility**

In accordance with God's Word, each member has a responsibility to support the local church through tithes and offerings.

### **Section 2: Budget**

The Pastoral Staff and Church Treasurer, after receiving budget requests from each department or area of church work, shall prepare and submit to the church a proposed Ministry Plan (budget) for the coming year. Members should have at least one week to look over the proposed Ministry Plan and be given the opportunity to ask questions of the Treasurer and Pastoral Staff. The proposed budget should indicate the amount needed and sought for by all departments or areas of church work. This budget shall be approved by a standing vote of three-fourths majority of the church members present in the business meeting in which the vote is held.

### **Section 3: Accounting Procedures**

All contributions made to the church shall be counted by the Church Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer and at least one other person as designated by the Pastoral Staff. At least two persons shall deposit all monies into the bank weekly. After monies have been counted and removed from envelopes, the counters shall provide a list of persons and amounts given to the Treasurer.

### **Section 4: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the church shall run from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Section 5: Disbursement**

All funds or re-imbursements shall be paid online or through checks signed by the Treasurer or one of the designated co-signers.

## **ARTICLE XVIII. AMENDMENTS**

The constitution and by-laws may be amended or revised by a standing vote of three-fourths majority of the members present and voting at a meeting specifically called for this purpose. Any revisions must be approved by the Leadership Team before being presented to the church. The proposed amendment(s) shall be presented in writing or electronically at least one week prior to a business meeting and copies of the proposed changes made available to each member present. As a general guideline, the church by-laws should be reviewed by the Pastoral Staff and Ministry Advisory Team at least every five years in order to ensure the by-laws fit the current needs of the church.

## **ARTICLE XIX. GENERAL**

### **SECTION 1. LICENSING AND ORDINATION**

Any person recommended by the Lead Pastor having given evidence that he is called to the work of the ministry, may be licensed to preach. The Lead Pastor shall possess the sole right to convene an Ordination Council to examine the qualifications of a candidate and, in turn, advise the Church as to the propriety of ordination. The final action to ordain such minister shall rest with the Church upon recommendation of the Lead Pastor.

### **SECTION 2. ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

This Constitution and the Bylaws, shall be considered adopted and will become effective the 11<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2022 upon affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those present desiring membership in Transformation Church.