

# THE GATHERING CONSTITUTION June 30, 2006

## ARTICLE 1

### NAME

The legal name of this church shall be THE GATHERING  
The operating name of this church shall be known as "THE GATHERING".  
(Hereinafter referred to as "the Church").

## ARTICLE 2

### VISION, PURPOSE AND MISSION

#### VISION

Passionate for God; that is, **Communion** or living in Christ  
Passionate for spiritual growth; that is, **Community** or living out Christ  
Passionate for others; that is, **Commission** or going out for Christ

#### PURPOSE

- Our purpose is the worship of the Lord our God, revealed to us in his Son, Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- We passionately seek God, follow Christ and respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- We use everything God has given us: bodies, minds, hearts, spiritual gifts and possessions to worship and love him.
- We use the same passion and gifts to love others.
- We carry God's love, manifested through Christ's death, life and resurrection into a lost world with bold confidence that that he is leading a people to himself.
- We are called to serve others and to tell them the Good News of Christ. In our church life we encourage fellowship among believers and nurture the spiritual growth of all.

This, THE GATHERING shall be carried on without purpose of financial or material gain for its members. Any profits or other accretion to the congregation shall be used for the sole purpose of promoting its objectives. In the event of the dissolution of this church, all assets remaining after payment of liabilities shall be transferred to VISION-MINISTRIES CANADA. All objectives of this

Church are exclusively charitable, and will never result in profit or gain for any member.

## **MISSION**

We want to be known as a loving community of believers that encourages one another to walk intimately with God through the help of the Word, prayer, supportive relationships and ministry; and that encourages transparency and growth as we carry out the Great Commission.

## **ARTICLE 3**

### **CORE MINISTRY, PROGRAMS, SERVICES**

1. We hold corporate worship, when all small group ministries gather
2. We provide ministry cell groups led by approved ministry leaders
3. We encourage smaller groups (triads of three or more) which meet for mutual accountability
4. We provide outreach ministries led by approved ministry leaders
5. We provide a children's ministry for Christian grounding
6. We provide a youth ministry for peer support and preparation for adult life
7. We offer pastoral care to the hurting, sick and needy
8. We recognize that we are stewards of God's creation, including our social responsibility to the poor, the sick, and other disadvantaged in our society

## **ARTICLE 4**

### **CORE VALUES**

1. We value individual and corporate intimacy with God
2. We value responding to God's initiative, compelling us to action at the promptings of the Holy Spirit
3. We value the diversity of God's gifts to us, independently of race, gender and age
4. We value each person's active Kingdom contribution, balanced with rest and healing
5. We value transparent, safe yet challenging relationships with all
6. We value cooperating with others, globally and locally, to build the Kingdom of God
7. We value change; form must always be at the service of function

## **ARTICLE 5**

### **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

As Christians at THE GATHERING, we remind ourselves of these, our commonly held beliefs:

#### **1. GOD**

God is one but exists eternally in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each is one in essence, possessing the same nature and attributes. Each does, however, have different roles, functions and activities (Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:19).

#### **2. JESUS**

The Lord Jesus Christ is truly God, fully human, and lived without sin. When he died on the cross, he died as our representative. He rose bodily from the grave to give evidence of his victory over sin and Satan. He now rules at the right hand of God as our intercessor (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:35; John 1:1; Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 1:19; 1 John 5:20).

#### **3. HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit lives in every believer and is at work confirming their relationship with God, guiding the believer in their daily walk with God, and giving power for victory over sin (John 14:16-18; 16:8-14; Ephesians 4:30; 5:8). The Holy Spirit empowers individuals by giving gifts and special abilities to accomplish God's will, gifts each person is responsible to use in order to build up the Church of Christ (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:14-31).

#### **4. THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

Jesus Christ rules over all things, through all times. He establishes the Kingdom of God, of which the Church is its current expression. In obedience to Christ, we reject every attempt to withdraw any area of life from the divine commandment to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind (Genesis 1:26-28, Matthew 4:17, 5:1-10, Mark 4:30-32, Luke 22:17-19, John 3: 3-5).

#### **5. CREATION**

The world in its creation, gracious preservation, and ultimate restoration is the work of the Triune God. Since the glorification of his name is its purpose, we can understand the world rightly only in its relation to him, as described in Scripture (Genesis 1:1-3, 31, 2:1-3, John 1:1-5, Revelation 21:1-3).

## 6. HUMANITY

Human beings were created in the image of God to enjoy covenantal fellowship with the Creator, and were instructed to exercise dominion over the world in loving and careful obedience to God, to interpret all reality in accordance with his design and law, and to reflect in all things the excellencies of our Maker (Genesis 1:27-28, Psalm 8: 3-6).

## 7. LIFE

Human life is sacred, and in its entirety is worship, for God created us to serve him everywhere (Matthew 18:5-6, 19:14-15, Romans 14:9, Revelation 22:3-5).

## 8. SIN AND SALVATION

We, by disobeying God's Law and forsaking our God-given place in the creation, estranged ourselves from God and our neighbour, and brought God's curse upon the creation. As a result, we have become stained in heart and blind to the true meaning of life, with a tendency to repress and misuse the knowledge of God, which confronts us in creation and in Scripture (Genesis 2:9, 3:23-24, Isaiah 59:1-2, Romans 3:23).

Therefore, we need God's salvation through the sacrificial death of Jesus. This salvation is a gift of God's grace, and is received by simply believing in him and following him as Lord, which makes the believer secure eternally. This salvation brings us into a living relationship with God, empowered by the Holy Spirit (Roman 3:23; Ephesians 2; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:5).

## 9. THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's word to us. It is fail-proof and without error and is our final authority in matters of doctrine and lifestyle (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 2:21).

## 10. THE CHURCH

The Church is God's means to bring the Good News of his salvation to our world. It is comprised of all persons, past and present, which have received God's free gift of salvation in Jesus. The purpose of the Church is to commune with God, to create a new community through common life in Christ, and to carry out Christ's commission on earth (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 1:22-23).

The church carries out two symbolic acts, both means of Christ's grace to us. Baptism of believers by immersion symbolizes our identification with Jesus in his death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:1-4; Colossians 2:12). Likewise, Communion is an act of remembrance carried out by the regular sharing of bread and wine, symbolic of salvation accomplished and made available by Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

### 11. OUR EQUALITY IN GOD'S EYES

We believe in the priesthood of all believers, regardless of age, gender, and race. By his death, Jesus became the believer's High Priest and makes it possible for each of us to have free access to the Father. In his presence, we can know God and receive from him. Similarly, we are responsible to come to him in confidence and faith, giving the worship of our words and our lives as a priestly offering to God (Hebrews 13:15-16; 1 Peter 2:9-10).

### 12. JESUS' RETURN

When Jesus comes back, his coming will usher in a series of end time events, which will culminate in the end of the age. His promise to return is an incentive for holy livings and faithful service (John 14:1-6; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; Titus 2:13).

## ARTICLE 6

### CHURCH COVENANT

We understand the Christian Church began with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and is composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. THE GATHERING is composed of believers in the Quinte and surrounding area who gather in Christ's name for worship, prayer, edification, witness, and to support one another as we advance the Kingdom of Christ. We believe that Christ is the only Head of the Church, that the Word of God is its only authority, and that the Holy Spirit is its only Guide to all truth. Church government is the responsibility of the Elders of this congregation.

As Christian people, we covenant together: to walk with each other in Christian love and fellowship; to strive for mutual spiritual growth, encouraging each other's gifts and praying for each other; to participate in worship; to support the ministry of the Church; and to demonstrate the Good News of Jesus Christ in our community and around the world.

We will also engage in prayer and Bible study with the goal of consecrating our lives to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. We will attempt to make our words and deeds at home and at work faithful and pure, helpful and hopeful, so that we are true to our calling and so that others may be drawn to Christ.

We enter this covenant in the Name of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## **ARTICLE 7**

### **TRUSTEES**

In accordance with the Religious Organizations Land Act, there shall be five Trustees appointed to conduct the legal business of the Church. They shall be the custodians of all legal business documents in connection with the Church and its property and shall hold, in trust, all properties owned by the Church. The Trustees shall be composed of three elders and two members elected at the annual Church Business Meeting.

## **ARTICLE 8**

### **AFFILIATION**

The Church is independently governed responsible for their own leadership and activities. The Church is also interdependent in that they need the benefit of giftedness, encouragement, guidance and fellowship of others. We work with other Christian churches and Christian para-church agencies. We are associated with a network of churches called Vision Ministries Canada, the Canadian Council of Christian Charities and support the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. All affiliation connections have Christian values and a statement of faith similar to ourselves.

## **ARTICLE 9**

### **GOVERNANCE**

The affairs of the Church shall be the responsibility of the Elders who hold the position for a period of three years.

The Church shall elect a Church Advisory, which shall meet periodically to order the affairs of the Church between annual business meetings. The Church Advisory shall consist of the Elders and at least six other church members elected at the annual business meeting. Committees may be formed as required by the Bylaws to report to the Church Advisory and implement approved activities. The Advisory shall oversee both Ministry and Administration concerns of the Church.

The Officers of the Church Advisory shall include: the Elders, one who will act as chairman, the Treasurer, the Church Clerk who will manage the correspondence and required records including a roll of the members of the Church, and other officers specified in the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE 10**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The members of this Church are believers in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who are in accord with Article 3, "Statement of Faith," and have been formally received into membership by the Elders.

As a servant of God and a representative of THE GATHERING and Jesus Christ, it is expected that they strive to set an example in speech, in life, in love, in faith, in purity and in family.

It is expected of members that they attend regularly, give offerings regularly to the church and live by the biblical principles as stated in the "Expectations of Lifestyle..."

#### **1. Members may be received by:**

- a) Profession of faith in Christ and believer's baptism.
- b) A letter of recommendation for baptized members of another Christian church, which requires a mature profession of faith for membership.
- c) Statement of Christian experience, baptism, and profession of faith when a letter of recommendation is not obtainable. Full membership may be offered to those who have experienced Christian baptism other than believer's baptism by immersion, provided they have made a mature decision to follow Jesus and have acknowledged it publicly.
- d) Restoration to fellowship after being removed from the roll.

#### **2. Members may be removed from membership by:**

- a) Joining another church with or without letter of recommendation.
- b) Becoming inactive for one year as defined in the Bylaws. Members who are inactive by reason of poor health or place of residence will not normally be removed from membership.
- c) Death.
- d) Expulsion according to scriptural principles, as articulated in Matthew 18:15-17, by the Elders. This will be a final resort after efforts at reconciliation have failed.

## **ARTICLE 11**

### **ORDINANCES**

The ordinance of baptism by immersion shall be administered to persons who have professed faith in Jesus Christ and have declared a personal Christian experience. The Church Elders will approve candidates for baptism.

This Church follows the practice of the presentation of children to God and the dedication of parents to Christian parenthood.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper (Communion) shall be observed during corporate worship and in small home groups when appropriate. All those attending who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour are invited to partake.

## **ARTICLE 12**

### **BUSINESS MEETINGS**

There shall be an Annual Business Meeting of the members of the church to receive reports, transact business, and appoint members to the Church Advisory. It shall be held by early March each year to allow time to receive financial reports for the prior calendar year. At least one month's prior notice of the Annual Business Meeting is required to be announced at the corporate worship services of the Church. Other business meetings may be convened by the Church after due notification as specified in the Bylaws. A quorum of one-third of the membership shall be required to officially transact business except in the calling of a pastor or amending the constitution. A vote of a simple majority of those members attending will be required to approve a motion except in matter of the constitution or a pastor's call. All attendees are eligible to question and speak at business meetings or special meetings however only members are allowed to vote. Proxy votes are not permitted.

## **ARTICLE 13**

### **1) AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION**

The Constitution may be amended at any annual meeting or special meeting of the Church called for that purpose, provided notice of such amendment, stating the proposed change, should have been given at a least three corporate worship services immediately preceding the date of such meeting. A quorum of one-half of the membership must be present at any meeting that amends the Constitution. An

amendment shall be approved if two-thirds of those members present vote in favour of it. Proxy votes are not permitted.

## **2) AMENDING THE BYLAWS**

The Bylaws may be amended at any annual business meeting or special business meeting of the Church, provided notice of such amendment, stating the proposed change, shall have been given at a least two corporate worship services immediately preceding the date of such meeting. A quorum of one-third of the membership must be present at the meeting and a simple majority vote is required to amend the Bylaws. Proxy votes are not permitted.

## **ARTICLE 14**

### **CHURCH STAFF: THE PASTOR**

The decision to call a candidate for Pastor shall be the responsibility of the Elders after consultation from the membership at a Special Business Meeting called for that purpose. Notice of this meeting shall be given at least two corporate worship services prior to such meeting. A quorum of one-half the membership must be present at this meeting and the calling be affirmed by two-thirds of those present.

The Pastor may be an ordained minister or candidate for the ministry who has acceptable credentials. As a member of the Church, the Pastor must be in accord with the Constitution, By-laws and Expectations of Lifestyle.

The Pastor reports to the Elders and will regularly meet with them as a full member of the Elder's board except in matters, which affects the pastor. Any problems arising with the Pastor shall be referred first to the Elders who will address the issues.

## **ARTICLE 15**

### **OTHER STAFF**

The Elders must approve in principle the staff positions to be filled and it is their responsibility to arrange for selection, employment, and termination of staff members.

All staff positions should be members of THE GATHERING if possible. If this is not possible, they must however be in accord with the Constitution, By-laws and Expectations of Lifestyle.

The Church reserves the right to screen any person, whether staff or volunteer, who will be involved in Church activities. This may include a police check, which however is compulsory for any staff working with children or youth.

APPROVED THIS 30<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JUNE, 2006

John (Jack) M Harris, Elder.....

Walter (Wally) R Lott, Elder.....

Mark L Norman , Elder.....