

## CLIFF'S NOTES ON GCBC CONSTITUTION – SUMMARY FOR MEMBERS CLASS

**ARTICLE I-III – NAME, FORM, LOCATION:** Gold Country Baptist Church is a non-profit 501c3 organization solely for religious purposes, meeting at 3800 N. Shingle Rd, Shingle Springs

**ARTICLE IV - PURPOSE:** This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. (Ephesians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 10:31)

**ARTICLE V – GUIDING PRINCIPLES:** This church shall seek to glorify God – through *God-centered worship* (Psa. 34:1-3) including *God-centered prayer, preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God* (the whole Bible – even difficult teachings), while loving God and obeying all His commandments (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2-3). In doing so – we seek to glorify God by: *equipping the body of Christ* to do the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:28) which includes the *proclamation of the Gospel* through personal evangelism (Matthew 5:16; 28:19-20; 1 Peter 3:15; Acts 1:8) and for the *mutual edification of the body of Christ* through discipleship, godly fellowship, ministering to the needs of others, and exhorting one another to live according to Biblical instruction and holy living.

### ARTICLE VI - GOVERNMENT:

**SECTION 1: Governing Authority:** The governing authority and head of this church is Jesus Christ alone (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:15-18), who has given to the church Elders to serve as spiritual leaders of the local church (Acts 20:17, 28). All the activities and affairs of the church are under the direction of the Elders.

#### SECTION 2: Board of Elders:

**Responsibilities include:** *Prayer and the ministry of the Word* (Acts 6:4), *encouraging sound doctrine* and godly character through sound doctrine and godly character and the shepherding God's flock. (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Titus 1:9). Everything else is conducted in accordance with those two principles including the oversight of church ministries, staff, policies, practices and programs. After prayerful consideration – all decisions when all are in unanimous agreement including the consideration of all applications for *church membership* and all matters of *church discipline*. They *select officers, pastors and staff*, have *fiduciary responsibility*. *Elders may receive financial support* from the church (1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 Corinthians 9:7-14; Gal. 6:6).

**Qualifications:** Elders shall be godly men who have been set apart by the Holy Spirit, and show evidence of the divine qualifications listed in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4). They serve as a plurality of Elders (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5) – meaning that no elder has more authority than another.

**Nomination And Selection Of Elders:** Recommendations for the office of Elder are *submitted by the congregation* to the Elders for consideration who actively *evaluate each candidates qualifications and character* according to Scripture (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1), examining with much care and prayer to discern whom God has set apart for service (cf. 1 Timothy 3:10; Acts 1:24, 13:2-3, 14:23). Each candidate must be *unanimously approved by the Elders* - and then *submitted to the congregation* to allow adequate evaluation of the candidates so as not to appoint any man inappropriately or hastily (1 Timothy 5:22). Approved candidates are *presented to the congregation for affirmation* of the decision of the Elders (cf. Acts 15:6, 22). *Each Elder shall serve until the next annual meeting* and must be reaffirmed each year (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, Hebrews 13:7, 1 Timothy 5:17).

**Removal and Resignation of Elders:** Any Elder may resign at any time upon giving written notice to the Board of Elders. He may by unanimous agreement of the other Elders be removed from office at any meeting of the Board of Elders if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified.

## **ARTICLE VII - MEMBERSHIP:**

### **SECTION 1. Membership**

As an Elder-led church, there shall be no 'corporate members' as defined by Section 5056 of the California Nonprofit Corporation Law. All rights which would otherwise vest in the corporate members shall vest in the Board of Elders.

### **SECTION 2. Church Membership**

**Qualifications:** To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a *believer in Jesus Christ* who gives *evidence of regeneration*, has been *baptized* following his or her repentance and *wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith* as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to *submit to the teaching of Scripture* and keep the commitments expressed in *Church Covenant*. The *Elders shall review and approve applicants* for membership and affirm before the church.

**The Privilege and Responsibilities:** The responsibilities of the members of this church are *centered in the person of Jesus Christ*, having been called to *unity with the Body* – in total submission to Him in areas – with the expectation that each member – *is expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of this church* through the use of their gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God, and shall endeavor, by the aid of the Holy Spirit.

**Membership Records:** The church maintains records of all those accepted into membership.

**Church Discipline:** The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining *purity in the local church* (1 Corinthians 5:6, 9-12), *to edify believers by deterring sin* (1 Timothy 5:20), and to *restore the offending believer* by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1). Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal per Mt 18:15-18.

**Termination of Membership:** Church membership shall be terminated when a *member unites with another church*, is voluntarily absent from services or fellowship for one (1) year, voluntary withdrawal, disciplinary action does not result in restoration or death.

## **ARTICLE VIII – ORDINANCES:**

This church shall regularly observe the ordinances of Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper as commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ for believers (Mt 28:19; 1 Cor 11:23-26, e tc.).

## **ARTICLE IX - MEETINGS:**

**Worship:** Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the Elders determine.

**Members Meetings:** Are held annually during the last quarter of the year. All members in good standing and over 18 years of age - are eligible to participate in votes of affirmation.

## **ARTICLE X - DEACONS:**

The Deacons are recognized servants who shall aid the Elders so that the Elders may be devoted to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1-7; I Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13; Philippians 1:1). These officers shall aid in the physical and spiritual care of the church, and perform other duties under the direction of the Board of Elders.

**Nomination and Selection of Deacons:** See process for Elders above

**Qualifications:** They shall be godly men who have been set apart by the Holy Spirit, and show *evidence of the divine qualifications listed in Scripture* (I Tim 3:8-10, 12-13; cf. Acts 6:3). They must be members and have demonstrated concern for the Lord's people and the Lord's work.

**Removal and Resignation:** See process for Elders above

**Meetings and Number:** As with Elders above, there shall be a plurality of deacons, and they shall meet regularly and maintain communication with church and Elders about needs of body.

**ARTICLE XI – CORPORATE OFFICERS** [note: this section has to do with corporation state laws requiring a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer, designated internally by Elders]

**ARTICLE XII – BIBLICAL FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP:**

This church shall follow the principles of Scripture in all areas of financial stewardship. The ministry of this church is the Lord's work, and shall be supported by the Lord's people who appropriate His resources through faith (Hebrews 11; Philippians 4:19) and prayer (Luke 11:9-10; James 4:3) and give to the ministry of this church. Full expression of the church's financial needs shall be made to the congregation.

**ARTICLE XIII - CHURCH STAFF (SALARIED PERSONNEL):**

**Staff Pastors:** The Pastors shall be Elders and shall perform the duties of an Elder described in Article VI, Section 2 and other duties as directed by the Board of Elders (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

**Pastor-Teacher:** The Pastor-Teacher shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching. The primary responsibility of the pastor-teacher as under-shepherd is to use his gifts and abilities to prepare God's people for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 4:13, 2 Timothy 4:1-2).

**Selection and Call:** The Board of Elders shall select a candidate. Upon approval by the Board of Elders he shall be presented to the congregation for affirmation.

**Term of Service:** He shall remain in office for an indefinite term and shall not be subject to the annual re-affirmation requirement.

**Resignation:** When a pastor resigns, thirty days notice shall be given in writing to the Board of Elders, unless waived.

**Termination:** If the other Elders unanimously discern that the services of a pastor should be terminated (following the biblical principles in Article VI, Section 2.E [1 Tim 5:19-20, Mt 18:15-18]), they shall give him thirty days written notice before dismissal.

**ARTICLE XIV - ORDINATION, LICENSING, AND COMMISSIONING:**

**Ordination:** public appointing of a man to the ministry based on unanimous recognition by the Board of Elders of his call to the ministry, preparation as a shepherd, and qualification to serve.

**Licensing:** may be issued by Elders and given in recognition of a man's call to pastoral ministry.

**Commissioning:** a member may be commissioned by the Board of Elders for ministry.

**ARTICLE XV - DISPUTE RESOLUTION:**

The Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with others both inside and outside the church, therefore the church shall require its members to resolve conflict according to biblically based principles (Romans 12:17-21, Matthew 5:23-25; Mark 11:25; Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8). In any dispute arising among church members, pastors, or staff pertaining to any matter of the church's teaching, practices, finances or property, the dispute shall be resolved by the Board of Elders.

**ARTICLE XVI - DISSOLUTION:** [if dissolved, assets go to similar tax exempt organization]

**ARTICLE XVII – STATEMENT OF FAITH – *On Marriage* (see also *What We Teach doc*)**

We believe marriage is an institution established by God and defined by God's Word as exclusively the legal union of one man and one woman in which such "one flesh" union is to be a lifelong commitment (Genesis 2:18-24; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:1-6; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-17; Ephesians 5:22-33). This church will uphold the honorable sanctity and blessedness of marriage in the Bible (Hebrews 13:4), and we believe any deviations or departures from God's design for marriage in Scripture (including but not limited to; adultery, fornication, incest, homosexuality, and any sexual relations before or outside of marriage as biblically defined above) are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and this church.