

HIGHER GROUND CHURCH CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1 – Name

The name of this church is Higher Ground Church. The church Directors have the discretion and authority to use a different public facing name if deemed appropriate to fulfilling the purpose of the church.

ARTICLE 2 – Organization and Incorporation

The organization of this church took place on August 28, 2024. The incorporation of this church as a non-profit organization under the laws of the State of Illinois is identified by No. 74851053. The church is organized exclusively for religious purposes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE 3 – Authority and Affiliation

- 3.1. Authority: The members of the congregation are the legislative and governing body of this organization
- 3.2. Affiliation: The church shall not be exclusively affiliated with any outside denomination or outside association.

ARTICLE 4 – Purpose

The purpose of Higher Ground Church is to fulfill the Great Commission by equipping a biblical community to wholeheartedly worship God and live out the Gospel in the north suburbs of Chicago.

ARTICLE 5 – Statement of Faith

- 5.1. We believe that the Bible is God’s Word, that it was written by humans divinely and uniquely inspired; that it is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of man; that it is absolutely trustworthy; and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct (2 Timothy 3:16- 17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- 5.2. We believe in one God, Creator of heaven and earth, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, measureless in power, existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death, all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (Genesis 1:1; Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 28:19; Romans 8:26; Hebrews 4:14-16; Romans 3:21-26).
- 5.3. We believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, God Himself became man, sinless in His life, making atonement for the sin of the world by His death on the cross. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His high priestly intercession for His people, and His personal, visible return to the world according to His promise (Luke 1:26-38; John 1:14-18; Hebrews 1:3;

Romans 3:21-26; 1 Corinthians 15:3-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:13-17; Hebrews 4:14-16; Revelation 22:20).

- 5.4. We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from God to glorify Jesus Christ; to convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and to regenerate, sanctify, empower, and comfort those who believe in Jesus Christ (John 14:15-26; John 16:4-15; Acts 2:1-4; Romans 8:9-11; 18-27).
- 5.5. We believe that mankind was created in the image of God, but through disobedience all became by nature and by choice sinners. The entire human race, therefore, is lost, and only through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ can salvation be obtained, thus restoring us to a right relationship with God. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead: the believer to eternal life in the presence of God, the unbeliever to judgment and eternal separation from God (Genesis 1:26- 27; Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Corinthians 15:50-57; Romans 2:6-11).
- 5.6. We believe in the Church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the Head, and of which all regenerated people are members. God has laid upon the Church the task of persuading a lost world to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and to enthrone Him as their Lord and Master. We believe, therefore, that all believers should live in a manner that glorifies Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Colossians 3:1-17).
- 5.7. We believe in the future vindication of living by faith in God's Word and God's promises, a future that is sealed by the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. We believe that as Jesus was raised from the dead, so, too, shall all those who belong to Him be raised to inherit eternal life. We believe that confidence in God's future should inspire the believer to live immovably for Christ today (1 Corinthians 15:12-58, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, John 14:3).

ARTICLE 6 – Membership

Any person who makes a confession of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, who assents to the church's Statement of Faith, and who is committed to support the congregation with their time, talents, and treasures, may become a Member in accordance with the procedures established by the church's By-laws.

ARTICLE 7 – Property

- 7.1. The church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of Illinois and as is deemed necessary for the business of the church and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed or otherwise. All such property shall be held in the name of the church.
- 7.2. When property of the church is in dispute due to church conflict, the Constitution and By-laws will govern decision making. If disposition of church property cannot be resolved in this manner, both parties shall subject the dispute to Christian mediation and/ or binding arbitration.

ARTICLE 8 – Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution are proposed by the Directors of the Church and approved at the annual or at a special business meeting of the church. Proposed amendments must be mailed to church members at least three weeks in advance of the business meeting. In order for an amendment to the constitution to pass, it must receive a three-fourths majority vote of members present.

ARTICLE 9 - Annual Meeting

The annual business meeting of the church shall be held in January of each year unless otherwise specified by the Directors of the church. The corporation's fiscal year shall be January 1 to December 31.

ARTICLE 10 - Provision of Bylaws

The church shall have the power to make such By-laws as are necessary and proper for the management of the business of the congregation. The By-laws are maintained by the Directors of the church and can be amended or altered by a majority vote of the Directors with the approval of the Senior Pastor, when one exists. Any changes to the By-laws do not take effect until three (3) calendar months after they have been published to the congregation; or by a majority vote of active members, they can take effect immediately.

Any modifications to the By-laws must maintain provision of:

- Appointment of church Directors, including if no sitting Directors exist.
- Methods for member-initiated inquiry into concerns on church governance.
- Member-controlled recall of Directors and Senior Pastor.

ARTICLE 11 - Provision of Scriptural Application Document

The church shall maintain a "Scriptural Application Document" clarifying how the church interprets and applies biblical texts to the business of the church. The document shall not be exhaustive but shall reflect potential sources of confusion for the purpose of guiding action without stifling ongoing study and conversation. The document shall be maintained separate from the Constitution and By-laws and can be amended or altered by a majority vote of the Directors with the approval of the Senior Pastor, when one exists. The church must teach and operate consistently with these written positions.

ARTICLE 12 - Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the church, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Priority shall be made to distribute for purposes consistent with the church's stated purpose (Article 4).