



***Christ Covenant Church
Constitution & Bylaws***

Last Updated: October 17th, 2023

History:

Constituted as Mission Church of Trinity Church on May 23rd, 2021

Amended on April 18th, 2023

Particularized as Full Member of CREC on September 27th, 2023

Amended on October 17th, 2023

CHRIST COVENANT CHURCH
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Preamble

In the church of God all things are to be done decently and in order. This pertains to the government of the church as much as to the corporate worship. Convinced that Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, will protect and guide her, we seek to obey Scripture through the following standards for the orderly and scriptural government of our church, Christ Covenant Church. These standards do not supplant Scripture, but rather are an expression of biblical church government under God. While biblical, these standards are primarily procedural; the doctrinal position of the church may be found in the Statement of Faith.

In submission to Scripture, we confess the purpose of our church is to glorify God through reverent worship, building up our members through preaching the whole counsel of God, observing Christ's sacraments, and proclaiming Christ to the world.

Our intention is to submit to all those principles regarding church order which are clearly required by Scripture, or required by deductions from Scripture which can be understood through good and necessary consequence. For the rest, we desire to operate in terms of a sanctified Christian prudence, with all things done in good order and biblical decency. At all times, we seek to submit to the Scriptures and to reflect the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ps. 133; Eph. 4:3,13).

Christ Covenant Church is member of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC) and was particularized as a full member church on September 27th, 2023. Prior to this we were constituted on May 23rd, 2021, as a mission church of Trinity Church (Woodinville, WA).

Article I. GOVERNING STATEMENTS

A. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The following statement of faith is not intended to define our boundaries of fellowship. Some Christians will certainly differ with some of what is set forth here. Such Christians are nevertheless welcome to fellowship together with us. Our basis for fellowship is a biblical confession of the lordship of Jesus Christ, and the absence of a scandalous lifestyle.

This statement of faith does represent the doctrinal understanding of the leadership of Christ Covenant Church, and it is our intention that the teaching and preaching at Christ Covenant Church reflect this understanding. Procedural standards for our church government can be found in our Constitution.

The elders of Christ Covenant Church subscribe to the following creeds and confession, believing that they are derived from the Holy Scriptures:

1. Apostles Creed (2nd century AD)
2. Nicene Creed; Constantinople (381 AD)
3. Definition of Chalcedon (451 AD)
4. Westminster Confession of Faith (American, 1788 AD)
5. Confessional Statement on Sex, Gender, and Marriage

1. The Apostles' Creed (2nd century AD)

I/We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin, Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hades; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into Heaven; and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I/We believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

2. Nicene Creed; Constantinople (381 AD)

I/We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the virgin, Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into Heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I/we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the Prophets. And I/we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church; I/we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I/we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

3. *Definition of Chalcedon (451 AD)*

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

4. *The Westminster Confession of Faith (American, 1788 AD)*

****See our Book of Worship, Faith, and Practice for the full text of this confession.***

- Elder Exception to WCF 21.8 (On The Sabbath): We believe that attendance at public worship is essential to observing the Christian Sabbath (Heb. 10:25) for indeed it is the highest of all human privileges. At the same time, we do not believe that the intention of Scripture is to exclude all recreation on the Lord's Day, but rather "servile work" (Lev. 23:7-8, Is. 58:13-14) and those recreations which impede the worship of God. Thus, we disagree with the confession that "the whole time" is to be taken up exclusively in the exercises of worship, and in duties of necessity and mercy. Our practice is to set aside a due portion of the day for religious exercises such that the Lord's Day is truly a day of rest, especially for our bodies.
- Elder Exception to WCF 29.7-8 (On Communion): We believe that "worthy receivers" of the Lord's Supper should include all baptized covenant members who are: 1) able to physically partake of the elements, and 2) spiritually exercise their faith according to their capacities, however small, and thus judge, examine himself, and discern the Lord's body. We deny that any fixed age of accountability should bar children from partaking. (Ps. 8:2, Luke 18:1-6, 2 Tim. 3:14-15, 1 John 2:12-13, 1 Corinthians 11, 2 Chr. 31:16).

5. *Confessional Statement on Sex, Gender, and Marriage*

- We confess that the church is subject to Christ, who is Lord over all. While church members ought to obey civil rulers in temporal things, provided they are not required by those authorities to sin (Mk. 12:13-17; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pt. 2:13-17), the church has a divine right to embody her beliefs in her practices and to carry out the mission Christ has entrusted to her without interference or hindrance. The church as an institution shall remain free from state control in faith, doctrine, and practice, and her members should not be forced to act contrary to their consciences, as informed by the Word of God. With these truths in view, we declare the church's right to reject any attempts on the part of the state to impose on her institutionally or her members individually unbiblical, unnatural definitions of marriage or sexuality.

- God created man male and female in the beginning for this very reason, that they might be joined together in the covenant of marriage as one flesh (Mark 10:5ff). Marriage as a covenant bond between a man and a woman is an institution founded not in cultural convention or convenience, but in God’s act of creation (Gen. 2:23-24).
- We resist and reject all attempts to redefine marriage to include same-sex partnerships. Certainly, we desire to serve and love persons with homosexual desires or who engage in homosexual practices. We know we are fellow image bearers and fellow sinners along with them, and we long to show them the compassion of Christ. But we cannot endorse the fulfillment of their desires under any circumstances. Rather, we call on persons with such desires to join us in trusting the Lord Jesus to forgive our sin through his shed blood and transform us by his healing grace.
- We claim the right for our churches and church members (whatever their particular vocation) to refuse to host, officiate, or in any way support same-sex “marriage” ceremonies, not out of animus, but out of love for God, neighbor, and truth. Likewise, we refuse to host, officiate, or support other ceremonies that violate biblical teaching on marriage.
- We reject transgenderism as a perversion of God’s good creational order. There are only two sexes, male and female (Gen. 1:26-28). Sex is not fluid, it is binary. We reject the notion that gender is determined by one’s feelings, or is detachable from biological and bodily givens. God forms each person genetically as a distinct male or female from the moment of conception. As God is the Creator, and makes each of us either male or female, we cannot unmake and remake ourselves into the opposite sex. Sex is an immutable feature of our identity as creatures; thus, it is impossible for anyone to change his or her sex.
- Gender dysphoria should not be used to create a protected class of persons, in which one’s feelings override the facts of biology, or in which the rights, dignity, and privacy of transgender persons override the rights, dignity, and privacy of others. Thus, we claim for our churches and church members (in whatever vocation they serve) the right to reject compliance with any public policies or laws that would require us to deny binary sexes, or to accept claims of gender identity that are contrary to one’s God-assigned biology. We reject the legal redefinitions of sex and gender that divorce either of these realities from God-given biology. We claim the right to speak to people according to their God-given sex, rather than reinforcing gender dysphoric confusions by using alternative pronouns. We claim the right to restrict access to intimate facilities (e.g., bathrooms, nursing areas, shelters, etc.), to sex-specific events, etc., strictly according to God-given biological realities. In the case of someone who has already transitioned to the appearance of the opposite sex, the session of the local congregation will determine the wisest and most compassionate course of action.
- All sexual sins can be forgiven through the shed blood of Christ, including the practice of sodomy and transgenderism. But forgiveness can never be separated from confession and repentance; forgiveness can never be separated from denying oneself and taking up the cross daily; forgiveness can never be separated from fighting against sin and pursuing holiness in the power of the Holy Spirit.

B. CREC CONSTITUTION

As a member of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches, Christ Covenant Church accepts all the constitutional requirements that come with this affiliation. The CREC Constitution can be found at www.crechurches.org/documents and is deemed to be included in this document by this reference.

Article II. MEMBERS AND ELECTORS

A. MEMBERS

1. Definitions

The reference to “Member” or “Elector” in these bylaws is a spiritual and theological term that does not have any civil effect for purposes of state law.

2. Membership Process

Membership is reckoned by a household of one or more people in the same family. A household is eligible for membership when the head of that household has been lawfully baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19) and does not contradict his profession through his manner of life (Matt. 7:22-23). Membership begins when the covenant membership vows have been taken (Philemon 2; Heb. 13:7, 17). The Elders oversee a membership list, which must include names, baptisms, and communicant status. Our membership vows are:

- “Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in need of salvation by Christ, and do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, receiving and resting upon Him alone as He is offered in the gospel?”
- “Have you been baptized in accordance with His Word?”
*Or, for credo-baptist households, “Have all who profess faith in your household been baptized in the Triune name?”
- “Do you swear in the name of God, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live in a way that becomes followers of Christ?”
- “Do you swear in the name of God to support the ministry of this church in its worship and work, submitting to its government and discipline, while pursuing its purity and peace?”

When the vows are presented to the head of a household, he will also be asked if he speaks on behalf of his household. When these vows are taken, the congregation will respond with “Amen” when they are asked:

“As members of this congregation of Christ, do you receive [this Christian/these Christians] into the covenant fellowship of this local church?”

In special cases, as circumstances warrant, individuals may come under our pastoral care without coming into membership.

As children of member households become more independent, it is the practice of the elders to invite them to reaffirm their membership as their own household. The elders will usually begin this conversation with children of member households after they turn twenty-one.

3. *Release or Transfer of Membership*

If any Member requests to be released to the care of another Christian church, the Elders will normally release him with a blessing. If any Member requests to be released because of disciplinary proceedings against him or someone in his household, the Elders will delay acting on the request until the disciplinary matter is resolved. If Members move from our geographical area, they are charged to find a new church home within six months. This time may be extended at the Elders' discretion. After this time is expired, they are released from membership.

4. *Baptismal Cooperation Agreement*

Families who hold either paedobaptist or credobaptist views are welcome at Christ Covenant Church and will be served by the elders under the conditions contained in this constitution. In accord with 1 Corinthians 7:14, the elders will regard the unbaptized children of any member household as holy, and thus subject to the conditions of the covenant of grace, which are faith and obedience to Christ. All parents will be instructed to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4), regardless of their position on baptism. All members are required to honor, acknowledge, and recognize infant baptisms as *true* baptisms (along with the communicant status granted to them), even if they disagree with the timing or mode of baptism.

5. *Communicant Members*

Under the headship of Christ, the responsibility for administering the sacraments remains with the Elders, who nevertheless, respect the pastoral responsibilities of the head of each household. All family members of Member households who have been baptized and have come to the Lord's Table are deemed to be communicant Members. Parents are charged to regularly instruct their children in the gospel and the meaning of the Lord's Supper. When a baptized child appears ready to partake of the Lord's Supper, the parents should notify the elders.

B. ELECTORS

Those Members who give input to the Elders on matters submitted to the Members are called Electors. Electors are the heads of Member households. Independent unmarried Members are considered as a household for purposes of communicating with the Elders. The Elders will qualify Electors and hold meetings of the heads of households in order to receive input from the congregation.

C. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

1. *Subjects of Discipline*

Members of Christ Covenant Church and non-member professing Christians who regularly attend our fellowship, who meet the criteria of membership according to these Bylaws or are

a regularly attending non-member professing Christian, may be disciplined according to the procedures outlined in the following sections (1 Corinthians. 5:12-13).

Members of other churches: If another church has disciplined one of its Members, and that individual seeks fellowship at Christ Covenant Church, then the Elders of Christ Covenant Church will seek to honor the discipline of the other church. This will generally be done after due consultation with the individual concerned and the appropriate information is obtained from the disciplining church. The discipline will be honored unless in the judgment of two-thirds of the Elders there is clear and compelling evidence that the discipline was unbiblical (3 John 9-10).

2. Informal Discipline

The Elders of Christ Covenant Church will, through teaching and example, encourage the Members and regular attendees of Christ Covenant Church to discipline one another through the following:

- Exercising self-discipline (Romans 8:13).
- Overlooking the failings of one another in love (1 Peter 4:8).
- Admonishing a brother if he needs to be corrected (Matthew 18:15).
- Taking one or two others as witnesses if the admonition is rejected (Matthew 18:16).
- Bringing the issue to the church through the Elders if it is still rejected (Matthew 18:17).

3. Censure & Suspension

The Elders of Christ Covenant Church may employ the various pastoral responses found in Scripture to deal with sinful and ungodly behavior as is fitting particular situations. These include both private and public applications of rebuke (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:20), warning (2 Thess. 3:14-15; Tit. 3:10), and suspension from the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 5:4-5, 11, 13).

4. Rejection

If in the opinion of the Elders, a Member of Christ Covenant Church or a non-member professing Christian appears to be acting in a contentious or divisive manner toward others, the Elders may reject the person as a teacher as an additional step in the informal discipline process. Such a rejection is not the same as putting someone outside the church but if, as an interim step, the rejection does not produce repentance, the Elders may proceed with formal judicial discipline. Any action taken by the Elders in rejecting someone shall be documented and the Electors shall be notified of the action taken and instructed to avoid the rejected individual. The person rejected will be notified of the action and discouraged from participating in church functions until the matter is resolved (Romans 16:17-19; Titus 3:9-11).

5. Judicial Discipline

a) Formal Judicial Discipline

When a dispute is brought to the attention of the Elders, they will ascertain whether or not the appropriate steps have been taken to resolve the matter privately. The Elders will also seek to carefully ascertain the facts of the case. As soon as the matter is

brought to the Elders' attention, all decisions of substance by the Elders concerning the case must be entered in the minutes.

If in the unanimous judgment of the Elders the individual accused of sin may be guilty, and is unrepentant, then the Elders will schedule a formal judicial session of the Elders. Notification of this meeting may be made to the Electors of the church.

Guidelines for any judicial session or subsequent trial are as follows:

- The one accused will be notified of the dates and times of the sessions.
- The one accused should be granted a reasonable amount of time to prepare a defense if he so desires (2 Corinthians 13:1).
- The Elders beforehand will appoint one of their number as a chairman for the hearing of the evidence.
- All the Elders, unless providentially prevented, will sit in judgment on the evidence.
- All the witnesses shall be placed under the most solemn oath (Deuteronomy 6:13).

After the evidence is presented, the Elders will retire to deliberate on the verdict. The Elders will remember at all times that the biblical standards of evidence are high, and that two or three witnesses are required in order to apply formal church discipline.

b) Formal Judicial Discipline Resulting From Egregious Sin

If a Member of the church is involved in an open and scandalous sin, then there is no requirement for individuals privately to confront that person before the church takes formal action (1 Corinthians 5:1-13). Private confrontation in such cases is certainly to be encouraged, but is not necessary before the church can act. In such cases, the Elders may act by immediately scheduling the first formal judicial session.

c) Discipline

If a guilty verdict is reached, the Elders will do the following:

- The verdict will be read at the conclusion of the second judicial session.
- The following statement will be read to the congregation of Christ Covenant Church on the subsequent Sunday:

Church discipline must always be conducted under the headship and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. This being the case, we acknowledge that Christ has required His church to conduct such church discipline in order to preserve and protect moral and doctrinal purity. The purpose of our church discipline is to glorify God through obedience, to maintain the purity of Christ's church, and to reclaim the offender if possible.

After repeated efforts to exhort and instruct [] with regard to [his/her] Christian duty to [], the Elders of Christ Covenant Church have determined, after a judicial trial on [date] in accordance with the pattern set forth in Scripture and the procedures of our church

constitution, that [] is guilty of the [charge/s] brought against [him/her] at that trial. The [charge/s was/were]:

- 1. Charge []*
- 2. Charge []*
- 3. Charge []*

It is therefore with grief that the Elders of Christ Covenant Church unanimously pronounce that [] is hereby expelled from Christ's church. We declare this day, by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church, that [] is excommunicated in accordance with the requirements of Scripture, and is put outside the body of Christ. [He/she] is delivered to the domain of Satan, and is hereafter to be deemed an unbeliever, thus excluding [him/her] from any hope of salvation, unless [he/she] humbly repents and is converted.

It is our prayer that God will use this action we have taken today to glorify His name, and if He is willing, to restore [] to fellowship with us.

- A report of the discipline will be made to the men of the church at the next men's meeting.

If an innocent verdict is reached, the accused party's name will be cleared during the next regularly scheduled church service. If such a verdict suggests deceitfulness on the part of any of the witnesses who testified against the accused, such witness or witnesses will become the subject of an immediate judicial investigation according to the rules set forth in these Bylaws (Deut. 19:15-21).

d) Penalty

As a result of the discipline, the one under discipline is to be considered and treated as an unbeliever (Matthew 18:17). To the Members of Christ Covenant Church this means:

- If the person chooses to attend church services, he will usually be allowed to do so, though the Elders may give a formal trespass admonishment if, in their sole discretion, the person subject to discipline presents a physical or spiritual threat to others. In no circumstances will he be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. The saints must not fellowship with the individual as though he were a Christian.
- If the circumstances warrant, there is no longer a scriptural prohibition of a Christian taking the individual under discipline to court before a civil magistrate.
- If the one under discipline seeks to find a church that will accept him, then the Elders of Christ Covenant Church will contact that church and supply them with appropriate information and records of the disciplinary action.

e) Restoration

Excommunication will end when in the unanimous opinion of the Elders the one under discipline has repented. A confession of this repentance will be read to the congregation on the Lord's Day, and the Elders shall formally announce the end of the discipline and restoration of fellowship.

Article III. OFFICERS

A. GENERAL

Our Lord continues to build his church through the ministry of men whom he calls and endues with special gifts for teaching, ruling, and serving. Some of these special gifts can be most profitably exercised only when those who possess them have been publicly recognized as called of Christ to minister with authority. It is proper to speak of such a publicly recognized function as an office, and to designate men by such scriptural titles as minister, evangelist, pastor, teacher, bishop, elder, or deacon. There are diversities of ministry within an office, for every man is called to be steward of his own gifts. At the same time, a general designation of office may be applied to a group of functions within which separate offices could be distinguished.

For purposes of communication, our polity can rightly be called "three-office." Those three offices are Minister, Ruling Elder, and Deacon. Under the one title of Elder we distinguish between Ministers of the Word and Ruling Elders. Ministers are those who must be examined and recommended by Presbytery, whereas Ruling Elders do not. Ministers of the Word may be further distinguished into Pastors, Teachers, and Evangelists. Under ordinary circumstances, Ministers are those who preach and administer the sacraments, but Ruling Elders may also preach and administer the sacraments by approval and consent of the whole session. Those men who are currently being trained for pastoral ministry may also preach and administer the sacraments by approval and consent of the whole session.

Christ Covenant Church shall be governed by the Elders.

B. ELDERS

1. Number

The Elders shall attempt to maintain at least three Elders at all times, with a maximum being simply the number that God calls to the position.

2. Candidates

New Elders will be considered from time to time as circumstances warrant. A man may be considered as a potential Elder in several ways. He may aspire to the office himself (1 Timothy 3:1), the Elders may approach him, or the people of the church may suggest his name to the Elders.

3. Qualifications

Once he becomes a candidate, the Elders will examine the candidate with regard to his doctrine and manner of life. If the candidate has any disagreement or mental reservation about any portion of the church's Statement of Faith or Constitution, then he must inform the

Elders of it. All candidates must meet the qualifications for the office set down in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:2-4).

4. Appointment

A man may not be considered by the Electors without a four-fifths vote of the current Elders. Upon a four-fifths vote of the current Elders, a potential Elder may be submitted to the Electors by the current Elders. If any Elector voices an objection to a candidate Elder's ordination, the Elders must carefully weigh the scriptural merit of the objection and meet as necessary with the Electors who raised the objection before ordaining the candidate Elder elect. If there are no objections to the candidate Elder from the Electors, the Elders will consider the candidate Elder elect. In either case, if the Elders deem the candidate qualified, the Elders will ordain him through the laying on of hands and prayer.

5. Term of Service

An Elder will be appointed for an initial two year term. At the end of a two year term, if he desires to continue serving the congregation, the Elder must be reaffirmed by a unanimous vote of the Elders. If reaffirmed, the Elders will extend his ordination for an additional five year term. After the subsequent five year term, if the Elder wishes to continue his service and the other Elders are in unanimous agreement as to his continued calling and qualification, he may again be submitted to the Electors. If there are no objections to the candidate from the Electors, the Elders will extend his ordination for life. If any Elector voices an objection to the Elders continued service as an Elder, the Elders must carefully consider the biblical merit of the objection, and meet as necessary with the Electors who raised the objection. In either case, if the remaining Elders deem the candidate qualified, the Elders will extend the Elder's ordination to a life-time term through laying on of hands and prayer.

An Elder will serve his current term unless he resigns or is removed.

a) Resignation

If an Elder desires to resign or take a leave of absence, he will present a letter to the Elders. At the first appropriate heads of household meeting, the Elders will notify the Electors of their receipt of the letter. If the desire of the Elder concerned is unchanged by the following heads of households meeting, the Elders will issue a statement accepting the resignation, or approving the leave of absence. If the resignation is sought for reasons of moral or doctrinal irregularity, the resignation will not be a substitute for any appropriate biblical discipline. Leaves of absence will not be granted as a form of discipline.

b) Removal

If a Christian believes an Elder may be morally or doctrinally unfit for his office, the scriptural requirement for him is clear: he is to approach that Elder individually first (Matthew 18:15), and then with two or three others (Matthew 18:16). If the problem remains, then the individual, with the two or three witnesses, should come to the other Elders and present the charges (1 Timothy 5:19).

If the charges are unanimously sustained by the other Elders, then that Elder, depending on the gravity of the charges and the response to the correction, will be rebuked in the presence of the congregation (1 Timothy 5:20), or will be removed from the office of Elder (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7), or both.

Provided this church remains a member church in good standing of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (“CREC”), a grievance against the Elders as a whole may be brought before one of the broader assemblies of the CREC in accordance with its governing documents. It is acknowledged by anyone bringing such a grievance that the sole remedy would be expulsion of this church from the CREC.

6. Ecclesiastical Responsibilities

Ministers (Pastors, Teachers, and Evangelists)

1. The ministry of the Word is a calling of God to stewardship in the gospel. In this ministry there is a diversity of gifts that are essential to the discharge of evangelistic, pastoral, and teaching functions.
2. Every minister of the Word, or teacher, must manifest his gifts and calling in these various aspects of the ministry of the gospel and seek by full exercise of his ministry the spiritual profit of those with whom he labors. As a minister or servant of Christ it is his duty to feed the flock of God, to be an example to them, to have oversight of them, to bear the glad tidings of salvation to the ignorant and perishing and beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, to exhort and convince the gainsayer by sound doctrine, and to dispense the sacraments instituted by Christ. Among those who minister the Word the Scripture distinguishes the pastor, teacher, and evangelist.
3. He who fills this office shall be sound in the faith, possess competency in human learning, and be able to teach and rule others. He should exhibit holiness of life becoming to the gospel. He should be a man of wisdom and discretion. He should rule his own house well. He should have a good report of them that are outside the church.

Pastors

Christ’s undershepherd in a local congregation of God’s people, who joins with the ruling elders in governing the congregation, is called a pastor. It is his charge to feed and tend the flock as Christ’s minister and with the other elders to lead them in all the service of Christ. It is his task to conduct the public worship of God; to pray for and with Christ’s flock as the mouth of the people unto God; to feed the flock by the public reading and preaching of the Word of God, according to which he is to teach, convince, reprove, exhort, comfort, and evangelize, expounding and applying the truth of Scripture with ministerial authority, as a diligent workman approved by God; to administer the sacraments; to bless the people from God; to shepherd the flock and minister the Word according to the particular needs of groups, families, and individuals in the congregation, catechizing by teaching plainly the first principles of

the oracles of God to the baptized youth and to adults who are yet babes in Christ, visiting in the homes of the people, instructing and counseling individuals, and training them to be faithful servants of Christ; to minister to the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and the dying; and to make known the gospel to the lost.

Teachers

1. A teacher is a minister of the Word who has received particular gifts from Christ for expounding the Scripture, teaching sound doctrine, and convincing gainsayers, and is called to this ministry.

2. A minister may serve a local congregation as a teacher if there is at least one other minister serving as pastor. The teacher may also give instruction in a theological seminary; or teach the Word in a school, college, or university; or discharge this ministry in some other specific way, such as writing or editing in the field of Christian religious education. He shall take a pastoral oversight of those committed to his charge as teacher, and be diligent in sowing the seed of the Word and gathering the harvest, as one who watches for souls.

Evangelists

1. Jesus Christ, to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth, has commanded his church to make disciples of all the nations. From the throne of his glory he sent forth the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, to empower the witness of the church to the gospel. While it is the calling of every believer to confess Christ before men, and while God gives particular gifts and calling to some to minister the Word, and while every minister of the Word must evangelize in the fulfillment of his calling, there are some who are particularly called by Christ and his church as evangelists. Ordinarily such men shall preach the Word free of pastoral charge in a particular flock in order that they may labor to bring in other sheep. And to those sheep whom Christ has brought in, evangelists shall administer the sacraments until a congregation shall have been regularly organized. Since the gifts and functions of evangelists are necessary until the end of the age, this ministry is permanent and not confined to the apostolic period.

2. The evangelist, in common with other ministers, is ordained to perform all the functions that belong to the sacred office of the minister. Yet distinctive to the function of the evangelist in his ministry of the gospel are the labors of (a) a missionary in a home or foreign mission field; (b) a stated supply or special preacher in churches to which he does not sustain a pastoral relation; (c) a chaplain in institutions or in military forces; (d) an administrator of an agency for preaching the gospel; and (e) an editor or similar ministry through the press and other means of communication.

Ruling Elders

1. Christ who has instituted government in his church has furnished some men, beside the ministers of the Word, with gifts for government, and with commission to execute the same when called thereto. Such officers, chosen by the people from among their

number, are to join with the ministers in the government of the church, and are properly called ruling elders.

2. Those who fill this office should be sound in the faith and of exemplary Christian life, men of wisdom and discretion, worthy of the esteem of the congregation as spiritual fathers.

3. Ruling elders, individually and jointly with the pastor in the session, are to lead the church in the service of Christ. They are to watch diligently over the people committed to their charge to prevent corruption of doctrine or morals. Evils which they cannot correct by private admonition they should bring to the notice of the session. They should visit the people, especially the sick, instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourning, and nourish and guard the children of the covenant. They should pray with and for the people. They should have particular concern for the doctrine and conduct of the minister of the Word and help him in his labors.

7. Ecclesiastical Meetings

The Elders will attempt to meet regularly to carry out the ecclesiastical responsibilities of the Elders as detailed above.

a) Quorum

One-half of the Elders shall constitute a quorum.

b) Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Elders shall be held upon the call of one-third of the Elders. The notice of the meeting may be verbal or in the form of a record and should generally be given at least 48 hours before the proposed meeting, though this time period may be shortened if, in the discretion of the party calling the meeting, it is an emergency. Notice of any meeting of the Elders may be waived in a record by any Elder at any time or by an Elder's presence at the meeting, except where the Elder attends the meeting with the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of any regular or special meeting of the Elders or any committee designated by the Elders need be specified in the notice or waiver of notices of such meeting unless required by these Bylaws.

c) Voting

Each Elder shall be entitled to cast one vote at any election or on any subject before any meeting of the Elders. Actions of the Elders are deemed to have been approved when passed by two-thirds of the Elders present.

d) Participation by Telephone

Elders may participate in a meeting of the Elders by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting.

e) Action Without a Meeting

Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Elders may be taken without a meeting if a consent, in the form of a record, setting forth the action to be taken is executed by all of the Elders. Any such consent shall be inserted in the minute book as if it were the minutes of an Elder meeting.

f) Moderator

The Elders will appoint one of their number to moderate the meetings of the Elders, and one to record the minutes of the meetings.

8. Compensation

Elders shall not be compensated for their service as Elders, but those Elders who also serve as employees shall be compensated by the church (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

9. Loans

The church shall make no loans to its Elders. The Elders who vote for or assent to the making of a loan to an Elder, and any officer or officers participating in the making of such loan, shall be jointly and severally liable to the church for the amount of such loan until the repayment thereof.

C. DEACONS

1. Number

There is no minimum or maximum number of Deacons.

2. Candidates

A man may be considered as a potential Deacon in several ways. He may aspire to the office himself, the Elders or Deacons may approach him, or the people of the church may suggest his name to the Elders.

3. Qualifications

The Elders will examine the candidate with regard to his doctrine and manner of life. If the candidate has any disagreement or mental reservation about any portion of the church's Statement of Faith or Bylaws, then he must inform the Elders of it. All candidates must meet the qualifications for the office set down in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

4. Testing

The Deacons will include the candidate in their work in order to prove his fitness for the office (1 Timothy 3:10). When the candidate has shown, in the two-thirds judgment of the Deacons, his fitness for office, the Deacons will make a recommendation to the Elders to consider a candidate as a Deacon.

5. Appointment

Deacons will be appointed by the Elders. A man may not be considered by the Electors without the two-thirds consent of the current Elders. If in the two-thirds judgment of the Elders, the candidate receives the clear and obvious support of the church, the Elders will ordain the new Deacon to the ministry through the laying on of hands and prayer (Acts 6:6).

6. Term

A Deacon will be appointed for an initial two year term. At the end of a two year term, if he desires to continue serving the congregation, the Deacon must be reaffirmed by a two-thirds vote of the Elders. Once reaffirmed, the Deacon will serve for life, unless he resigns or is removed.

a) Resignation

If a Deacon desires to resign or take a leave of absence, he will present a letter to the Elders. At the first appropriate heads of household meeting, the Elders will notify the Electors of their receipt of the letter. If the desire of the Deacon concerned is unchanged by the following heads of households meeting, the Elders will issue a statement accepting the resignation, or approving the leave of absence. If the resignation is sought for reasons of moral or doctrinal irregularity, the resignation will not be a substitute for any appropriate biblical discipline. Leaves of absence will not be granted as a form of discipline.

b) Removal

If someone believes a Deacon may be morally or doctrinally unfit for his office, the scriptural requirement for him is clear: he is to approach that Deacon individually first (Matthew 18:15), and then with two or three others (Matthew 18:16). If the problem remains, then the individual, with the two or three witnesses, should come to the Elders and present the charges. If the charges are unanimously sustained by the Elders, then that Deacon, depending on the gravity of the charges and his response to the correction, may be corrected, or removed from the office of Deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

7. Ecclesiastical Responsibilities

Under the general oversight of the Elders, the Deacons will manage the financial, physical, social, and benevolent functions of the church (Acts 6:2-4). Such responsibilities will ordinarily include: budgetary advice, building maintenance, fellowship meals, administration of subordinate ministries, and office support.

Individual Deacons are responsible for those duties assigned to them by the Deacons, and recorded in the minutes, with due regard to their gifts and desires. There is no distinction of rank among the Deacons.

8. Ecclesiastical Meetings

All usual business of the Deacons will be conducted at their regular meeting, or at a special meeting called for a particular purpose. The Deacons will appoint one of their number to moderate the meetings of the Deacons, and one to record the minutes of the meetings. The Deacons will be prepared to give a general report of their work as need requires, but ordinarily on a quarterly basis. They will give an annual report to the Elders with proposals for the upcoming year.

Article IV. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

By unanimous vote of the Elders on May, 23rd, 2021, Christ Covenant Church became a member of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches. We hereby amplify the stated intention of this communion as found in the preamble to its constitution which "...is not intended as a *separation from* other orthodox believers who confess the name of Christ, but rather as a *gathering within* that broader church, in order to work together effectively for reformation."

Withdrawal from the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches may only occur by unanimous vote of the Elders of Christ Covenant Church. As a member of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches, Christ Covenant Church accepts all the constitutional requirements that come with this affiliation. The CREC Constitution can be found at www.crechurches.org/documents and is deemed to be included in this document by this reference.

Article V. AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended by a three quarters vote of the Elders present at any meeting of the Elders, provided that the Elders were notified before the meeting that an amendment or amendments would be considered at the meeting and which shall ordinarily only occur after consultation with the Electors of the church.

