

**CONSTITUTION OF
THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
ST. FRANCIS, KANSAS**

Adopted by congregational vote 11/13/22

Amended 03/28/26

Preamble

We, the members of the First Christian Church, an Elder-governed body, in order to promote the work of the church in the Spirit of Christ and thus advance His kingdom, do hereby adopt this constitution.

Article I – Name, Purpose, and Corporation #

First Christian Church

The name of this organization shall be the First Christian Church of St. Francis, Kansas. This church is independent and free so far as it relates to its internal organization and the regulations of its own affairs. It is in subjection to no ecclesiastic body, except by its own consent. It controls the admission, discipline, and removal of its members according to its own understanding of the Word of God.

Purpose

The purpose of this congregation shall be as revealed in the New Testament, to win people to faith in Jesus Christ and commit them actively to the Body of Christ as manifest in the Church, to help them grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and that, increasingly, they may know and do His will, and to work for the unity of all Christians and with them engage in the common task of revealing the Kingdom of God. To that end, the church has adopted this Mission Statement: Proclaim Jesus Christ, Share life around the Gospel and Grow in faith.

Corporation

The incorporation of the congregation shall be in accordance with the decree of incorporation, number _____, filed in the office of the Kansas Secretary of State.

Article II - Doctrinal statement

We uphold these nine core beliefs as essential to the Christian faith.

We *believe*...that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God and without mistakes, as originally written. It is the complete revelation of His will for salvation and the only unfailing rule of faith and practices for the Christian life (1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:30-21; 2 Peter 3:15-16).

We *believe*...in one God, Creator of all things, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and these three are co-eternal and of equal dignity and power (Matthew 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4, 14; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6).

We *believe*...in the deity of Jesus Christ; His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit; His virgin birth; His sinless life; His substitutionary death on a cross; His bodily resurrection; His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal, imminent return (John 1:1-4; Hebrews 1:1-3; Luke 1:29-38; Matthew 1:18-25; 2 Corinthians 5:32; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Ephesians 1:20-23; Luke 12:39-40; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We *believe*...that man was created by and for God; that by man's disobeying God, every person incurred spiritual death, which is separation from God, and physical death as a consequence; and that all people are sinners by nature and practice (Genesis 1:26-27; Colossians 1:16; Romans 5:12-19; Genesis 3:1-19; Psalms 14:1-3; 51:5; Romans 3:10-19; 23; 5:12-19; Ephesians 2:1-3).

We *believe*...the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins and that all who believe in Him are declared righteous because of His sacrificial death and are, therefore, in an eternally right relationship with God (John 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:29; Acts 13:38-39; 16:31; Romans 1:16-17; 3:22; 25-26; 4:5; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 2:15-21; 1 John 2:2).

We *believe*...that water baptism of new believers and the regular practice of the Lord's Supper for all believers are the only ordinances given to the church as a

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scriptural means of testimony (Matthew 28:19; Acts 10:47-48; 16:31-33; 18:7-8; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

We *believe*...in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit indwelling all believers and thus enabling and empowering the life and ministry of the believer (1 Corinthians 12:1-13; John 14:16-17; 16:13-15; Romans 8:9-16; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18).

We *believe*...in the personal involvement of every believer to become more like Christ through his or her individual study and application of God's Word and practice of prayer (Psalm 1; 2 Corinthians 3:15-18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

We *believe*...in the bodily resurrection of everyone who has lived, the everlasting blessedness in a glorified body of those in right relations with God, and the everlasting punishment of those who have rejected God's forgiveness in His Son (1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4 13-18; Revelation 20:10-15).

Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We believe it is the role of the Elders of the church to interpret, teach, uphold and provide oversight to the Church Body in the workings out and practical application of the Word of God in the context of this congregation.

Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image of God. (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the way that God intended for that person to reflect God's image.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and

one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

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We believe that any form of sexual immorality) including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the First Christian Church as the local body of Christ and to provide a biblical role to the church's members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the First Christian Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, or who join as members agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16, Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess, repent and forsake their sin, seeking God's mercy and forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We believe that God offers His grace to all people, regardless of past sins, if they respond to His offer of salvation through faith in Christ).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the First Christian Church.

First Christian Church Marriage Policy

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, the First Christian Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the pastor of First Christian Church shall only conduct weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facility and property of First Christian Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman. It is also within the right and responsibility of the Elders to discern whether or not it is appropriate for him to conduct a marriage in good faith and conscience.

Membership

1. The membership of this church shall consist of those who are identified now as members of the congregation and those who will unite with this church as members. To unite with this church as a member requires a person to

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publically confess Christ as personal Lord and Savior, be baptized, and be accepted into membership after discussion with the pastor and elders, agreement with a membership covenant provided by the pastor and elders, and upon affirmation before the congregation during a Sunday morning worship service.

2. A person who desires membership with this church by a statement of faith or transfer of membership from another church family may be considered for membership by the elders provided that he/she has been baptized. If such a person's baptism was other than immersion -- i.e., sprinkling or pouring -- baptism by immersion will be encouraged, but not a requirement. Persons who have never been baptized shall be baptized by immersion to be received into membership of the First Christian Church.
3. First Christian Church shall receive as members those who have by faith accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and who by their lives manifest a born-again experience. Once members reach the age of 18, they become voting members of the First Christian Church.
4. No person shall be excluded from membership because of God-given gender, race, nationality, or ethnic origin. In addition, he/she shall agree to adhere to the Statement of Faith submit to Elder leadership and abide by the Constitution, bylaws, and policies of the First Christian Church.
5. Any person who qualifies per the above and desires membership shall contact the pastor or an elder. Those who are admitted to membership by the pastor and elders shall be affirmed for membership before the congregation as soon as possible.
6. Pastors and their wives automatically become members with full congregational voting privileges upon receipt and acceptance of a call from the First Christian Church.

Article III - CHURCH GOVERNMENT

THE ELDER TEAM

1. The Elders shall be members of this church who are mature, godly men, who fully

support the Bible and the Doctrinal Statement of this church and its articles of incorporation, by-laws, and policies, and who manifest the qualifications stipulated by the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

2. Selection of new elders will be made on the basis of the spiritual qualifications found in Scripture, leadership qualifications, and commitment to this church. The elder team will conduct the selection process as led by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

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3. There shall be no limits to the number of terms an elder may serve. Any elder who does not fulfill the qualifications or duties of his office or fails to attend Elder Team meetings without good reason or does not regularly attend the weekly worship service of the church shall, after notice and attempt to restore said member, be asked by the Elder Team to resign.
4. The pastor shall lead the Elder Team in all matters pertaining therein. The Elder Team will elect from its members each year: a moderator of the church meetings and a secretary for the Elder Team meetings. The moderator is primarily responsible for calling church meetings and notifying all members of times, dates, locations, etc. The secretary will take minutes of the Elder Team meetings.
5. The Elder Team shall evaluate itself. It shall be a self-disciplining team according to Matthew 18:15-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20. However, the elders are directly accountable to the Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ, for all their actions and decisions (Hebrews 13:17). They are also accountable to the congregation. Any Elder who fails to uphold the Doctrinal Statement of Faith, the qualifications of an Elder per scripture, or in any way defiles the office of Elder, the congregation may rule to have him removed directly.
6. The elders will have essentially a three-fold function:
 - (1) To build and develop their own families in the Lord (1 Timothy 3:4-5);
 - (2) To feed, shepherd, and pray for the flock of God (John 21:15-17; Acts 10:17-32; Acts 6:1-40. This involves positive impartation of truth, refutation of error, administration of discipline; and (3) To oversee and manage the ministry of this local Body (Acts 2:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3). This involves assessing the needs of the entire body, planning, evaluating, and appointing those to assist in various areas of responsibility including deacons, volunteers, and paid ministry staff. It shall be their primary function to care for the spiritual health of the church by praying for and imparting the Word of God to the congregation and overseeing the ministry of the church assuring that the

ministry teams function in such a way as to fulfill the mission, vision, and values of the church.

7. A quorum for an Elder Team meeting shall consist of a simple majority (if only 2 Elders are serving all must be present) of the members of that team. 8. The Elder Team will concern itself with the needs of the community determine areas of need that require the support of the church, and make a

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periodic analysis of the mission of the church in relationship to the needs of all people in the community and the world.

9. For purposes of the church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Pastor and Elder Team is the Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Article IV - Leaders and Officers of the Deacon Board

Quorum – A quorum for the Deacon Board meeting will be a majority. A quorum for Congregational meetings will be 1/3 of active members (an active member is in attendance more than twice a month for the past 3 months) or 2/3 of members present.

If a quick or urgent decision needs to be made by the Deacon Board a vote via electronic message will be used that includes not less than one elder and the pastor and reflected in the minutes of the following month.

Section A – Deacon Board

The following officers shall be selected from the congregation for a term of one year with no term limits. (If unable to serve the full one-year term, a successor will be elected and assume the unexpired term). They will serve as members of the Deacon Board. The following officers shall be selected from the membership of the congregation.

1. Qualified members of the Congregation as discerned by the Elder team
2. One Elder

It is the understanding that the Elder Team and Deacon Board will fully communicate and work together for the good of the Church Family. The Elder Moderator and Deacon Chairperson will work together to schedule congregational meetings. The Elder Team will make decisions concerning spiritual matters and oversight while the deacon board

works out the practical and business matters under the elder's leadership.

Section C – Executive Officers Elected by the Deacon Board

The following officers shall be elected by the Deacon Board

1. Chairperson

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2. Vice-Chairperson

3. Secretary

4. Treasurer

5. Financial Secretary

Section D – Qualifications of Officers of the Deacon Board

In addition to qualities of a willing spirit and a desire to serve, it is essential that prospective candidates be lovers of God's Word, servant-hearted, and accept the following principles of stewardship:

1. Biblical Qualifications for Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13)

a. Worthy of respect – the actual word is “grave,” or “dignified,” and refers to the qualities of being realistic and practical.

b. Sincere – honest, speaking the truth from the heart.

c. Not indulging in much wine – self-controlled.

d. Not pursuing dishonest gain – not greedy, not willing to compromise principles for selfish motives.

e. Must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience – this involves two aspects: first, a distinctively competent knowledge of sound doctrine and the Christian faith, and second, consistency in practicing what they know

f. Husband of one wife – faithful in the marriage relationship.

g. Must manage his children and his household well – able to manage his own household.

2. Regular attendance of Deacon Board meetings

3. Regular attendance of services of the church and participation in at least some weekly events (i.e. Sunday School, Small Group, Prayer Night, Bible Study, etc)

4. Willingness to fulfill one's assignment when serving on a committee 5.

Regular contributions, to the best of one's ability, to the financial support of the

church

6. Conductibility of one's total life in such a manner as to be deserving of the office
7. Promotion of goodwill and Christian fellowship within the church family
8. Strengthening the varied programs of the church

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9. Assistance to the pastor and membership in making the total life and work of the church related to the purpose of God as revealed in Jesus Christ
10. Striving toward continual personal growth in Christian stewardship

Consideration will be given in light of the spirit and teachings of Jesus, but it is the role of the elders to invite people to the Deacon Board after observing the above qualities in a church member's life.

Section E – Duties of Executive Officers of the Deacon Board

1. Chairperson. The Chairperson shall fulfill all the usual duties of such an officer, call and preside at all regular or special business meetings both of the Deacon Board and congregation if need be.
2. Vice-chairperson. The vice-chairperson shall fulfill all the above-named duties in the absence of the chairman. He or she will also serve as a trustee (see footnote 1)¹.
3. Secretary. The secretary shall keep minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Deacon Board and congregation.
4. Treasurer. The treasurer shall disburse all funds of the church according to the authority designated to him/her by the elders and shall make a monthly report to the Deacon Board and a quarterly and annual report to the congregation. He or she will also serve as a trustee (see footnote 1).
5. Financial Secretary. The financial secretary shall receive and make a record of all funds and deposit them in the proper church accounts. He/she shall keep an individual account record of each contributor, send out reports as directed by the Deacon Board, and present a report to each regular meeting of the Deacon Board and a quarterly report to the congregation. Gifts that are marked designated shall be kept inviolate.

¹ The trustees shall act as the legal agents of the church in all business matters under the direction of the Elders and Deacon Board and, subject to the approval of the congregation, hold legal title to all church property and handle all business transactions related thereto. They shall have supervision over all endowment and trust funds, perform such duties as are required by the laws of the state, and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the congregation.

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Each Member of the Deacon Board will assume the duties as team leader for one of the following areas: Women's Ministry, Men's Ministry, Property, Worship, Education, Missions, Finance, Deacon, Historian/Membership, and Technology.

1. The Deacon Board will meet monthly at the best time determined by the majority of the board members at the first meeting of the newly elected board and the time and date made public to the congregation.
2. Special meetings can be called to conduct time-sensitive issues with a majority present. In the event, that the physical presence of the board is not possible for time-sensitive issues a consensus poll can be taken via, phone, email, or texting requiring a majority to take action and the results confirmed and made an official record at the next regular board meeting.
3. The Deacon Board will approve an annual budget and refer the budget to the Elders for consideration and the congregation for accountability.

Article V – Organization of the Deacon Board

Section A – Duties of the Deacon Board

1. The Deacon Board shall perform its duties according to the authority granted in this constitution or otherwise delegated to it by the Elder Team. 2. All business meetings of the congregation and the Deacon Board shall be governed first by the Word of God, then by the Holy Spirit. Robert's Rules of Order (Revised) may be utilized if the Chairperson deems it helpful. 3. All boards, organizations, fellowship groups, and committees shall be responsible to the Elders first then to the Deacon Board. and, through the Deacon Board, to the congregation. The Elders and Deacons shall be accountable to the congregation and shall report to it each year at the annual meeting.

4. The Deacon Board is charged by the Elders with the duty of conducting business affairs and planning and executing the programs of the church. The Deacon Board will function by such general policies as have been adopted by the congregation and by-laws. The actions of the Deacon Board are at all times subject to review by the congregation and the Elders. Many of the overall responsibilities of the Deacon Board will be carried primarily by the various functional committees, but those committees are always answerable to the Deacon Board and the Elders.
5. The more specific functions of the Deacon Board are as follows: 10
 - a. To establish the personnel of the functional teams through which the work of the church is primarily carried forward.
 - b. To regularly receive, consider, and act on reports from the various functional committees and teams, approving, disapproving, or modifying the recommendations contained therein.
 - c. To consider and establish policy in harmony with general congregational policy.
 - d. Each team leader shall recruit and organize the people necessary to carry out the duties of their team. Team duties are as follows:

The Deacon Board

The Members of the Deacon Board will be affirmed by the Elders annually and must be a member of the church. There is no term limit; however, it is expected that Deacons will serve a minimum of two years. The Deacons shall cooperate with the Elders in promoting the growth and welfare of the Church, be responsible for greeting and ushering the worshipers, distributing the Lord's Supper, receive the offering, ministering to the needy of the Church, and perform such other duties as may be revealed in the New Testament or otherwise assigned by the Congregation.

1. Deacon –
 - a. To serve the needs of the sick, needy, and aged by visiting with them, arranging transportation for the aged and infirm to the Sunday morning worship services, and making requests upon the benevolence fund or directly to the church family to help with any financial needs.
 - b. To assist the property chairman and committee with any property maintenance issues and encourage church members to be involved in

the help needed.

- c. To assist in the distribution of communion elements in the Sunday morning worship service according to a rotation schedule.

Biblical Qualifications for Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13)

- d. Worthy of respect – the actual word is “grave,” or “dignified,” and refers to the qualities of being realistic and practical.
- e. Sincere – honest, speaking the truth from the heart.
- f. Not indulging in much wine – self-controlled.

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- g. Not pursuing dishonest gain – not greedy, not willing to compromise principles for selfish motives.
- h. Must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience – this involves two aspects: first, a distinctively competent knowledge of sound doctrine and the Christian faith, and second, consistency in practicing what they know
- i. Must first be tested – experienced in the faith and in service. Deacons had better not be phonies nor easily discouraged; the people with whom they will work can spot phonies and can try patience.
- j. Husband of one wife – faithful in the marriage relationship. k. Must manage his children and his household well – able to manage his own household.

1. Mission Team –

- I. The Missions team shall consist of the leader along with as many individuals as the leader deems necessary to accomplish the goals of the FCC Missions Team. The members shall be recruited by the team leader. The leader should have the desire, time, vision, and enthusiasm to oversee all the missions and projects that FCC is involved with. The leader should delegate responsibilities to the team as needed. The Missions Team should:
 - i. Provide leadership and a missions vision to the church family
 - ii. Help in planning all missions trips, projects, and programs
 - iii. Review annually the missions projects that FCC is involved with, and give recommendations to the Elder Team/Deacons
 - iv. Serve as a liaison and corresponds with mission agencies
 - v.

Develop a budget for annual missions given by FCC

2. Worship Team –

a. The worship team is under the direction of the Elders but ideally, the person carrying the responsibilities of the worship team will be qualified as a deacon or deaconess. Under the direction of the elders, the worship team will coordinate in good faith with the Deacon Board to help provide music for events, services, and other times as needed. **3. Women Ministries –**

a. The Deaconesses shall perform the same general duties as the deacons and cooperate with them in promoting the growth and welfare of the

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Church, have responsibility over the Christian Women's Fellowship under the leadership of the Elders, and organize a team for the preparation of the communion service, assist with the preparation of candidates for baptism, minister to the families in times of sickness and bereavement, and such other duties as may be revealed in the New Testament or otherwise assigned by the congregation.

- b. To promote women's and family ministries and activities throughout the year, reporting as a liaison to the Building and finance board, all activities, and financial reports.
- c. To report any plans of activities that might affect the church in a spiritual manner to the Elder Board for approval.
- d. Women's ministry activities include, but are not restricted to fundraisers, bible studies, funeral dinners, family fun nights, etc. **4.**

Historian/Membership –

- a. The Church Historian shall work closely with the Church Secretary to gather and preserve data pertaining to the history, life, and work of the church, making available for publication any historical materials authorized by the Elder and Deacons
- b. The Historian will help the Secretary keep a complete record of the Church's membership and such vital statistics as births, deaths, baptisms, and weddings; receive all applications for church letters and issue them under authority delegated by the Elders.

5. Education –

- a. The Education Team is made up of at least a Deacon board member and the Pastor. The team will look at choosing a curriculum that meets specific

criteria whether it is for Sunday school, Children's Church, or any other kind of Bible class for any teacher that needs it.. This criterion includes 1. doctrinally sound, 2. sound teaching-learning process, and 3. developmentally appropriate.

- b. The education team should be mindful of the budget when purchasing the curriculum.

6. Financial Team –

- a. The finance team (financial secretary, memorial fund secretary, and treasurer), is responsible for all the assets of the church.

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- b. They should submit a yearly budget. The financial team should be a member of the congregation and will have no term limit; however, they should remain in position for a minimum of two years.

7. Elder Representative –

- a. The Elder representative shall serve as a liaison between the Deacon Board and the Elders. He will help communicate the church vision at Deacon meetings and ensure that a spirit of grace, love, and mercy is pursued at all meetings. The Deacon Board shall not meet without an Elder present except in the case of express permission of the Elders. **8.**

Men Ministries –

- a. Men's Ministry - To encourage fellowship for the men in our church; including, but not limited to monthly men's prayer breakfast, encouraging fellowship through different opportunities as they arise such as occasional Monday night football, shooting blue rock, etc. To encourage leadership in order to reach some of the younger men in our church and community.

9. Property –

- a. The Property Team; shall consist of a Deaconboard member, selected by the Deacon members at the first meeting of the newly elected board each year. The Property team leader may select to serve on the team as many individuals as the leader deems necessary to accomplish the maintenance and repairs of all FCC properties.
- b. This shall include:
 - i. Submitting a yearly budget

- ii. Submitting a repair and maintenance plan
- iii. Oversee the care and maintenance of the Church building & grounds, Church parsonage & grounds
- iv. Overseeing volunteers and hired individuals performing repairs and maintenance on all church properties.

10. Technology –

- a. The Technology Teams is responsible for completing tasks related to social media, websites, presentations, and any other technology that comes forth in the future. This team is responsible for making sure that the technology is working, that communication is efficient and well done, the website stays current, and that technology used during the Worship Services is ready prior to the service. They will notify the Deacon Board if there is something that is needed or is not functioning correctly.

Article VI – The Pastor

Section A – Duties of the Pastor

The pastor of the church shall Shepherd the church and perform the duties which usually pertain to that office as well as the responsibilities outlined in the Pastor's Job Description and Letter of Calling. He shall, in cooperation with the chairman of the Deacon Board and the Elder Team encourage orderly procedures in the life and work of the church through the effective use of Scripture, the constitution, and by-laws.

Section B – Selection of a new Pastor

1. A representative committee of five (5) persons, nominated by the Elders shall serve as the Pulpit Committee. This committee shall be responsible for recommending a prospective pastor to the congregation..
2. It shall be the policy of the congregation to consider only one (1) prospective pastor at a time. However, information may be secured on several prospects in a given period.
3. The Pulpit Committee will recommend a prospective pastor to the Elder Team for consideration.
4. The Elder Team will recommend the accepted prospective pastor to the congregation.
5. The recommendation of the Elder Team must be accepted by at least a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting in a regular or special meeting of the congregation before a call may be extended.
6. The term of the pastor shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated by either party upon sixty (60) days' notice. A written statement setting forth the salary to be paid and other conditions of the call shall be

made in duplicate, one copy for the pastor and one for the church.

Section C – Resignation of the Pastor

1. The voluntary resignation of the pastor shall be submitted to the Elder Team in writing.
2. Following action on the resignation by the Elder Team, an Elder should announce the action to the congregation.
3. The congregation and the pastor shall remember that their relationship is more than a mere contract and conduct themselves accordingly in the spirit of Christ.

Section D - Removal of a Pastor or Elder

1. **Grounds for Removal-** The Senior Pastor may be removed from office for just cause, including but not limited to: a. Persistent doctrinal error or teaching contrary to the essential doctrines of the Reformed faith as affirmed in the Westminster Confession of Faith (with exception to practicing only believers baptism); b. Moral failure or conduct unbecoming a minister of the Gospel, including but not limited to violations of the biblical qualifications for elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9); c. Neglect of pastoral duties, such as failure to preach the Word faithfully, shepherd the flock diligently, or administer the ordinances properly; d. Division or scandal within the congregation caused by the Pastor's actions or words, after reasonable efforts at reconciliation have failed (Matthew 18:15-17); or e. Incapacity due to prolonged physical or mental health issues rendering the Pastor unable to fulfill duties, as determined by a competent medical evaluation.

No removal shall occur without evidence reasonably establishing the grounds, and all proceedings shall be conducted with prayerfulness, confidentiality where appropriate, and a spirit of restoration where possible (Galatians 6:1).

2. **Initiation of Proceedings-** Proceedings for removal may be initiated by: a. A written petition signed by at least two of the active elders. or b. A written petition signed by at least Thirty-three percent of the active voting members of the congregation, submitted to the elders for review.

Upon receipt, the elders shall convene within seven (7) days to determine if the petition states a prima facie case under Section 1. If affirmed by a simple consensus of the elders, proceedings shall commence; otherwise, the petition shall be dismissed, and no similar petition on the same grounds may be

submitted for (6) months.

3. **Investigative Committee-** The Elders shall appoint an ad hoc Investigative Committee of three (3) impartial church members and one (1) elder (one from outside the congregation if feasible) to: a. Gather evidence confidentially, including interviews with relevant parties; b. Present a written report to all elders within thirty (30) days, including findings of fact and recommendations; and c. Ensure the Pastor is notified in writing of the allegations and provided an opportunity to respond in writing and in person within ten (10) days of notification.

The Pastor shall continue in active ministry during this phase unless the Session unanimously determines immediate suspension is necessary to protect the congregation.

4. **Hearing and Decision-** a. Upon receipt of the Investigative Committee's report, the elders shall convene a formal hearing within fourteen (14) days, open to the Pastor and any witnesses deemed necessary. The Pastor shall have the right to counsel (lay or ordained) and to present evidence or witnesses. b. Following the hearing, the elders shall deliberate in executive session with all active elders present. c. If removal is affirmed, the decision shall be communicated in writing to the Pastor and the congregation within seven (7) days, including the effective date (not less than thirty (30) days hence, unless immediate for cause). Severance provisions, if any, shall be as outlined in the Pastor's call agreement. d. If removal is not affirmed, all records shall be sealed, and proceedings deemed concluded.
5. **Appeal and Oversight-** a. The elders' ruling shall be final and binding.
6. **Restoration and Records-** a. Removal does not preclude future restoration if repentance and reconciliation occur, subject to Session approval and any presbytery oversight. b. All proceedings shall be documented securely, with access limited to the Session and as required for appeal. Public disclosure shall be minimal, guided by Matthew 18:15-17.

Section A – Meetings to Be Held

1. Annual Meeting. The congregation shall hold an annual business meeting on the second Sunday of the new church year. This annual meeting shall be for the purpose of announcing the members of the Deacon Board for the coming year, hearing reports of the year gone by, approving the proposed church budget and projected program, and caring for special items of business.
2. Special Meeting as Required. Such meetings are to be called by the Elder Team, chairman of the Deacon Board in cooperation with the Elders, or by a written petition of twenty (20) members of the congregation presented to the Elder Team.

Section B – Notice of Meetings

Notice of all regular or special business meetings of the congregation (except for amending this constitution) shall be announced at a regular Sunday morning worship service of the church at least one week in advance of the meeting and by means of the church newsletter or by a written notice sent through the mail or email and postmarked at least three (3) days before such a meeting. The purpose of the meeting shall be indicated in each notice.

Section C – Rules of Order

All business meetings of the church, Elders, and Deacon Board shall be governed by submission to Scriptures, bathed in prayer, and held in a spirit of grace and peace as is pleasing to God.

Article VIII – Amendments

This constitution may be amended at any business meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting on the amendment, provided written notice of the proposed amendment has been made available to the members of the congregation at least ten (10) days prior to the time the vote is to be taken or the proposed amendment has been read at two consecutive Sunday morning worship services before the vote is taken.