

CHRIST REDEEMER

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Live Oak, FL

Constitution

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Article 1 -- Name

- 1:1** The name by which this organization shall be known in law shall be "Christ Redeemer Presbyterian Church," referred to herein as "the church."

Article 2 -- Constitution

- 2:1** The Constitution of the church, which is subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, shall consist of these bylaws to the Articles of Incorporation along with the *Relational Commitments* and the *Book of Confessions*.
- 2:2** The *Book of Confessions* to which Christ Redeemer Presbyterian Church adopts as its Doctrinal Standards shall be the Three Ecumenical Creeds (*The Apostles' Creed* - 2nd century; *The Nicene Creed* – Constantinople, 381 AD; and the Definition of Chalcedon - 451 AD), and the *American Westminster Confession of Faith* (1788)

Article 3 -- Organization and Incorporation

- 3:1** The organization shall be organized as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Florida (USA).

Article 4 -- Purpose and Limitations

- 4:1** The purposes of the church are:
- a. To bring glory and honor to the triune God by promoting true Biblical worship, mutual edification, Christian fellowship and gospel witness;
 - b. To operate exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the classification of legal charities; and no part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of any private stockholder or individual; and no substantial part of the activities of the organization, or any receipt of its funds, shall be utilized for any other purpose except those purposes mentioned above;
 - c. To handle affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by the civil authorities.
- 4:2** The church shall not have or issue shares of stock, and no dividends shall be paid. No part of the income or assets of the church shall be distributed to any member or officer without full consideration. The church is prohibited from lending money to guarantee the obligation

of a member or officer of the church. No member or officer of the church has any vested right, interest or privilege in or to the assets, property, functions, or activities of the church. The church may contract in due course, for reasonable consideration, with its members or officers without violating this provision.

Article 5 -- Location of Office

5:1 The registered office of the church shall be located within state of Florida at the address of the church's registered agent. The Board of Directors (also known as the *Council of Elders* or the *Session*) or a majority of the members may change the registered agent and the address of the registered office from time to time, upon filing the appropriate statement with the Secretary of State.

Article 6 -- Membership

- 6:1** The membership shall consist of all communicant members, all of whom have the privilege of pastoral oversight, instruction, government and discipline of the church. Communicant members are those who have been baptized and have made a credible profession as a follower of Jesus Christ along with their baptized minor children. Adult members shall be received into membership as provided in section 6:2.
- 6:2** A person may be received into communing membership by a letter of transfer from another church of the evangelical Reformed faith and approved by the Council of Elders, by reaffirmation of faith, or by credible profession of faith. In order to be received into membership, a person must sign a Membership Covenant and be examined and received by the Council of Elders.
- 6:3** A member of minor age (younger than 18 years of age) must sign the Church Covenant before they can become a voting member at the age of 18.
- 6:4** All communicant members who are at least eighteen years old and in good standing in the church shall be voting members. ("Good standing" means that a member is not presently under current disciplinary action.) Any voting member in attendance at a duly called congregational meeting shall be entitled to one vote on matters brought before the congregation. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. The pastor shall also be entitled to vote.

- 6:5** Members may be removed from membership at their own request by informing the Council of Elders of their intention to withdraw with reasons submitted. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Council of Elders shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Council of Elders is unable to resolve those matters, then the member's name shall be removed from the membership role. If it appears to the Council of Elders that a member has requested removal to avoid church discipline, that request shall not be granted until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded (see Matt. 18:12-20; Bylaw Article 16: Relational Commitments, and Supplemental Policy Statement "*Commitment to Accountability and Church Discipline*").
- 6:6** Members may also be removed from membership by the Council of Elders when they: persistently, over an extended period of time, and without adequate reason absent themselves from the stated services of the church; unite with a church of another denomination; cannot be found for a period greater than two years; or are removed by excommunication for persistent impenitence. Members who are minor children may be removed from membership with their parents or when they reject the covenantal responsibility of submission to home, or church discipline and neglect the ongoing exhortation of the Council of Elders to profess faith in Christ.

Article 7 -- Elders and Deacons

- 7:1** Elders and deacons must be male voting members. In order to be eligible for election, a man shall have been a member in good standing in the church for at least one year, shall have received appropriate training under the direction or with the approval of the Council of Elders, and shall have served the church in functions requiring responsible spiritual leadership.
- 7:2** Elders, individually and jointly with the pastor, 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 that they cannot correct by private admonition they should bring to the notice of the Council of Elders. 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 pastor and assist him in his labors.

- 7:3** The New Testament office of deacon was instituted to show forth the compassion of Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy toward the saints and strangers on behalf of the church. As directed by the Council of Elders, deacons shall minister to the temporal needs of members and friends and see to the stewardship of church property.
- 7:4** Any voting member may propose to the Council of Elders nominations for the offices of elders and deacons. However, a wife may not nominate her husband. The Council of Elders shall certify those nominees whom, upon examination, it judges to possess the necessary qualifications for office. An elder or deacon who had been previously certified, but who resigned from or was divested of the office must be re-certified. At least two Lord's Day preceding the date (cf. # 13:4) appointed for the election, the Council of Elders shall announce to the church the names of those it has certified. Election shall be from those certified. Voting on the election of elders and deacons shall be done by secret ballot, and each vote shall be cast either in favor of or against the election of each candidate, and those candidates receiving the vote of a majority in favor of their election shall be deemed elected. Elders and deacons shall be elected for three-year terms of service. If an elder or deacon is elected at a meeting other than the annual congregational meeting, his regular term shall expire at the time of the second annual congregational meeting following his election.
- 7:5** An elder or deacon may be divested of his office by church discipline for an offense in doctrine or life. An elder or deacon also may resign from his office.
- 7:6** Officers may be granted emeritus status from the session as a way of honorably retiring from office. The session can make any officer “emeritus” with a two-thirds vote. Emeritus officers hold an emeritus title, and may still be engaged in the work of the church (including preaching and administering the sacraments as requested by the Session), consulted by the other officers for wisdom, and are worthy of honor for their time of active and official service to the church, but are no longer voting members of the session or diaconate and are relieved of their other official duties. Emeritus ministers are still accountable to the Session.

Article 8 – Pastor

- 8:1** It is the charge of the pastor 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, visiting in the homes of 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.
- 8:2** The pastor may resign his position upon thirty days' written notice. If the Council of Elders believes that the pastor's services are no longer edifying to the congregation, and if private efforts to remedy the situation are unsuccessful, the ministerial relationship may be dissolved as follows:
- a.** a Called Session Meeting shall be called by the Council of Elders for the purpose of discussing this issue;
 - b.** those requesting the pastor's resignation shall be allowed to state the reasons for their request, and the pastor shall be given the opportunity to respond, as shall other members of the church by invitation of the Council of Elders;
 - c.** the first meeting shall be adjourned. A second meeting shall be called at a time not sooner than one week and not later than two weeks from the time of the first called meeting (8:2a);
 - d.** at the second meeting, further appropriate and temperate debate shall be allowed, and a vote by the Council of Elders shall be taken. The pastor shall recuse himself from this vote;
 - e.** the ministerial relationship shall be dissolved upon a super-majority of $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the elders.
 - f.** if the ministerial relationship is dissolved for other than moral causes, the church shall provide the pastor with at least three month's severance pay of salary and health insurance (or a combined severance of one month for every year of service up to 6 months), and shall consider providing such other assistance as is necessary for his needs and the needs of his family while he seeks other employment.

Article 9 – The Council of Elders

- 9:1** The Council of Elders is the spiritual governing body of the church and shall consists of its pastor(s) and elders.
- 9:2** The Council of Elders shall oversee the following ministries:
- a. all matters concerning the public worship of the church;
 - b. the promotion of the best measures for spiritual growth of members and the congregation at large;
 - c. the encouragement and training of members for evangelistic witness;
 - d. the actions of reception, dismissal, and discipline over the members of the church;
 - e. the encouragement of the ministries of the Board of Deacons, and all other organizations, committees, and groups of the congregation; and
 - f. the use of the church property or rented facilities.
- 9:3** The Council of Elders shall choose its own moderator and clerk annually from among its members. The Council of Elders may also choose a vice-moderator from among its members, and shall appoint a treasurer, who must be a voting member of the congregation and may be a deacon or elder.
- 9:4** The Council of Elders shall meet at least quarterly and shall convene at the call of the moderator or any two members of the Council of Elders. Either oral or written notice, including the date, time, and place of a meeting, shall be given at least two days before a meeting.
- 9:5** A quorum shall consist of a minimum of two elders or a majority of elders, whichever is greater.
- 9:6** An action of the Council of Elders shall require at least a majority vote of the quorum. Any member of the Council of Elders has the right to have his negative vote recorded with reasons stated if he desires.
- A pastor or elder shall be deemed to have approved of an action taken if he is present at a meeting of the Council of Elders unless:
- a. he objects at the beginning of the meeting (or promptly upon arrival) to holding or transacting business at the meeting; or
 - b. his dissent or abstention from the action taken is entered in the minutes of the meeting; or
 - c. he did not approve the action and he delivers written notice of dissent or abstention to the presiding officer of the meeting

before its adjournment or immediately after adjournment of the meeting.

- 9:7** The Council of Elders may meet by means of a conference telephone call or similar communications equipment. Provided all persons entitled to participate in the meeting received proper notice of the meeting, and provided all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. A member participating in a conference telephone meeting is deemed present in person at the meeting. The moderator of the meeting may establish reasonable rules as to conducting business at any meeting by phone.
- 9:8** The moderator shall, when present, preside at all congregational meetings of the members and of the Council of Elders, and shall conduct such meetings so as to facilitate free, respectful, and temperate discussion and decision-making.
- 9:9** If the Council of Elders appoints a vice-moderator (vice-chairman), he shall perform, in good faith, the moderator's duties if the moderator is absent, dies, is unable or refuses to act. If the vice-moderator acts in the absence of the moderator, the vice-moderator shall have all of the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the moderator. If there is no vice moderator, or the vice moderator is unable to, or refuses to act, then the clerk shall perform the duties of moderator.
- 9:10** The clerk shall be the secretary of the church and shall in good faith:
- a. create and maintain one or more books for the minutes of congregational meetings and of the Council of Elders (Session Meetings);
 - b. provide that all notices are served in accordance with these Bylaws or as required by law;
 - c. be custodian of the church and corporate records;
 - d. draft a proposed set of the minutes of congregational meetings, all meeting minutes of the members, and of the Council of Elders meetings;
 - e. when requested or required, authenticate any records of the church;
 - f. keep a current register of the post office postal address of each member; and
 - g. in general perform all duties incident to the office of clerk and any other reasonable duties that the moderator or the Council of Elders may assign to the clerk.

9:11 The treasurer shall:

- a. have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of the church;
- b. receive and give receipts for moneys due and payable to the church from any source, and deposit all monies in the church's name in banks, trust companies, or other depositories that the Council of Elders shall select;
- c. submit the books and records to a Certified Public Accountant or other accountant as directed by the Council of Elders;
- d. in general perform all of the duties incident to the office of treasurer and any other reasonable duties that the moderator or Council of Elders may assign to the treasurer. If required by the Council of Elders, the treasurer shall give a bond for the faithful performance of the treasurer's duties and as insurance against the misappropriation of funds. If a bond is required, it shall be in a sum and with the surety or sureties that the Council of Elders shall determine.

9:12 The Council of Elders may establish such committees as it deems necessary for the work and ministry of the church.

Article 10 -- The Board of Directors

10:1 The Board of Directors shall consist of the members of the Council of Elders in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation.

10:2 The Board of Directors shall have the power and authority to make rules and regulations consistent with the laws of the State of Florida, the Constitution, and these Bylaws. The Board of Directors shall manage the business affairs of the corporation.

10:3 The Board of Directors shall have final authority for affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by civil law for nonprofit corporations. In particular, the Board of Directors shall be responsible for the acquisition and disposition of church property, which includes the management of its financial resources. Neither the Board of Directors nor its delegates shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, pledge or in any manner encumber any church property worth more than \$5,000, nor to incur any indebtedness exceeding the sum of \$5,000, unless first authorized to do so at a congregational meeting. The Board of Directors may delegate to the Board of Deacons or to other communicant members these fiscal responsibilities as it deems appropriate.

- 10:4** If at any time there are less than three persons on the Council of Elders, the congregation may elect from the Board of Deacons and, if necessary, from among the voting members, individuals who will temporarily serve as directors of the church for the purpose of carrying out any required corporate business. The terms of such temporary directors shall expire when sufficient elders have been elected and ordained to bring the number of the Council of Elders to three or more.
- 10:5** Annually the Board of Directors shall elect its officers: President, Vice President, Associate Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The President shall be the chairman of the Board of Directors and the principal executive officer of the corporation. He shall also act as moderator.
- 10:6** The President may sign, with the secretary or any other proper officer of the church that the Board of Directors has authorized (i.e. deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other Board of Directors' authorized instruments).

Article 11 – The Diaconate

- 11:1 The diaconate shall oversee the ministry of mercy in the church and shall disperse funds for the relief of the needy. Deacons are also responsible for stewardship of church property as well as assisting with the church's worship and fellowship gatherings. Other forms of service for the church may also be committed to the deacons as deemed necessary by the Council of Elders.
- 11:2 The diaconate must meet at least twice a year and shall act by simple majority vote. The diaconate should elect an archdeacon to serve a two-year term. The archdeacon is responsible for organizing the diaconate, calling and overseeing meetings, ensuring minutes for meetings are recorded, and serving as a liaison between the diaconate, the Council of Elders, and the congregation. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms an archdeacon may serve. The session may replace an archdeacon at any time.
- 11:3 In the absence of a diaconate, these duties shall be conducted by the Council of Elders or to others it may delegate by action of the Session.

Article 12 — The Call, Installation and Ordination of Pastors

- 12:1** The church shall proceed to select and call a pastor in the following manner:
- a. The Council of Elders shall be a pulpit committee and may appoint up to five members at large from the congregation to assist it in the process to call a new pastor.
 - b. The Council of Elders should examine any prospective ministerial candidate to determine
 - 1) that the candidate is biblically qualified for the office,
 - 2) his belief's are compatible to the doctrinal standards of the church,
 - 3) his convictions and passion matches the church's mission, purpose and philosophy of ministry and worship.
 - c. The pulpit committee shall, after consultation, deliberation and prayer, recommend to the congregation a pastoral candidate who, in its judgment, is qualified for the office and whose life and ministry experience is most suited to be profitable to the spiritual interests of the church.
 - d. The Session shall arrange for the ministerial candidate to lead in worship including the reading and preaching of the Word of God prior to any congregational meeting. Other opportunities of congregational interaction with the pastoral candidate are encouraged.
 - e. The Council of Elders shall order a congregational meeting to convene at the regular place of worship. Public notice of the time, place, and purpose of this meeting shall be given at least one week prior to the time of the meeting.
 - f. When a congregation is convened for the election of a pastor an appointed member of the Session shall moderate the congregational meeting.
 - g. All voting members in good standing, but no others, are entitled to vote. No absentee voting is permitted.
 - h. A secret ballot shall be used in the vote that is taken. A vote of at least 75% shall be required to extend a call to the candidate.
- 12:2.** The terms of the call shall be approved by the congregation in the following or like form:

The Christ Redeemer Presbyterian Church being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, _____, and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. That you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of \$ _____ a year in regular monthly payments, and other benefits, such as, manse, retirement, insurance, vacations, moving expenses etc., during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this church.

In testimony whereof we have respectively subscribed our names this _____ day of _____, A.D. _____.

Attest: I, having moderated the congregational meeting which extended a call to _____ for his ministerial services, do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the Constitution and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

Moderator of the Meeting

Clerk of the Meeting

12:3 The day appointed for the installation (and ordination if necessary) having come, and Session shall call the assembly of the congregation to worship and make suitable arrangements for worship:

The Session being convened along with other invited elders in the presence of the congregation the worship service shall include the following elements: 1) Call to Worship, 2) singing of psalms and hymns, 3) a sermon suitable for the occasion shall be preached by a person appointed or invited by the Council of Elders, 4) reading of the call to the pastor, 5) reception of the call and pastoral affirmation of vows, 6) questions to the congregation, 7) laying on of hands of elders, 8) prayer of installation, 9) charge to the pastor, 10) charge to

the congregation, 11) the right hand of fellowship, and 12) closing prayer and benediction.

12:4 The questions to be asked the pastoral candidate during the ordination and/or installation service and answered in the affirmative are:

- 1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?**
- 2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Reformed doctrinal standards of our church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will on your own initiative, make known to the Council of Elders the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?**
- 3. Do you approve of rule of elders as the proper biblical form of church government and agree with and seek to follow the *Statements of Biblical Relationship* as adopted by Christ Redeemer Presbyterian Church, as general principles to be in conformity with Biblical reconciliation, relationship and church discipline?**
- 4. Do you promise submission in the Lord to your fellow elders in Christ Redeemer Presbyterian Church?**
- 5. Have you, as far as I know your own heart, sought the office of the Gospel ministry from a love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the Church and in the world?**
- 6. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful to maintain the truths of the Word of God and the purity, peace and unity of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise to you on that account?**
- 7. Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?**
- 8. Do you promise to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life and to walk in a manner worthy of the Gospel, with exemplary piety before God's flock, over which He is placing you as a shepherd?**
- 9. Do you promise to rely upon God's grace and strength in the discharge of your duties as pastor?**

12:5 The questions that are to be asked the congregation during the ordination and/or installation service are:

- 1. Do you, the people of this congregation, profess your readiness to receive _____, whom you have called to be your pastor?**
- 2. Do you promise to receive the Word of Truth from him with meekness and love?**
- 3. Do you promise to encourage him in his labors in the Gospel ministry, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?**

12:6 The formal statement as the right hand of fellowship is extended shall be publically declared:

We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this ministry with us.

The presiding elder shall then say:

I now pronounce and declare that _____ has been regularly elected, (ordained), and installed as pastor of this congregation, agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the constitution of our church; and that as such he is entitled to all support, encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Article 13 -- The Nomination, Examination, Election, Installation and Ordination of Officers

13:1 Prior to the annual election of officers, the Council of Elders shall request from the congregation for a period of one month nominations to the offices of Elder or Deacon.

The Council of Elders shall meet with the nominees to determine whether they are willing to accept the nomination and submit to a course of instruction and training prior to an examination by the Council of Elders.

The Pastor along with the Elders shall conduct a course of instruction and training of nominated officers. The course of training shall be approved by the Session and must be satisfactorily completed before the officer is examined by the Session

- 13:2** After the course of training has been satisfactorily completed, the officer candidates are examined by the Session in the areas of: 1) Christian experience, 2) Reformed Biblical doctrine, 3) Presbyterian Church government, 4) English Bible, 5) the duties of the office to which they are nominated, and 6) their willingness to fulfill the duties of the office.
- 13:3** Following the examination of the nominee the Council of Elders shall in Executive Session discuss the biblical qualifications of the nominee; then after a prayer, vote whether to place the nominee before the congregation. The nominee must receive at least $\frac{3}{4}$ vote majority of the vote of the Session.
- 13:4** The Council of Elders shall announce the nominees to the office at least two-weeks prior to the annual congregational meeting. The nominees approved to service in the office to which they are nominated are to be elected by majority vote by secret ballot.
- 13:5** Those nominees elected by the congregation to serve as elders and deacons shall be ordained and/or installed during a regular Lord's Day worship announced to the congregation one week prior to this special service.
- 13:6** During the service or ordination and/or installation an appropriate sermon suited to the occasion shall be preached. Following the sermon the officer(s) elected by the congregation will come before the congregation in the presence of the Session to affirm the following officer vows:
- 1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?**
 - 2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Reformed doctrinal standards of our church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will on your own initiative, make known to the Council of Elders the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?**
 - 3. Do you approve of rule of elders as the proper biblical form of church government and agree with and seek to follow the *Statements of Biblical Relationship* as adopted by Christ Redeemer Presbyterian Church, as general principles to be in**

conformity with Biblical reconciliation, relationship and church discipline?

- 4. Do you promise submission in the Lord to your elders (and fellow Deacons) in Christ Redeemer Presbyterian Church?**
- 5. Have you, as far as I know your own heart, sought this office from a love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the Church and in the world?**
- 6. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful to maintain the truths of the Word of God and the purity, peace and unity of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise to you on that account?**
- 7. Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as an officer in the Church of Jesus Christ?**
- 8. Do you promise to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life and to walk in a manner worthy of the Gospel, with exemplary piety before God's flock?**
- 9. Do you promise to rely upon God's grace and strength in the discharge of your duties as an officer?**

13-7 The questions that are to be asked the congregation during the ordination and/or installation service are:

- 1. Do you, the people of this congregation, profess your readiness to receive _____, whom you have elected to be your elder (or deacon)?**
- 2. Do you promise to receive the Word of Truth (in the case of elders) from him with meekness and love?**
- 3. Do you promise to encourage him in his labors in the ministry of shepherding and spiritual oversight, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?**

13-8 In the case of an ordination, the candidate shall kneel before the congregation with the laying on the hands of the Council of Elders with a prayer of installation offered by the a member of the Council of Elders.

13-9 The formal statement as the right hand of fellowship is extended shall be publically declared:

We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this ministry with us.

The presiding elder shall then say:

**I now pronounce and declare that _____
has been regularly elected, ordained, and installed as
Elder (or Deacon) of this congregation, agreeable to the
Word of God, and according to the constitution of our
church; and that as such he is entitled to all
encouragement, honor, and obedience (the word
obedience is omitted for Deacon) in the Lord.**

**In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Article 14 -- Congregational Meetings

- 14:1** An annual meeting of the church shall be held in January of each year at a date, time, and place to be determined by the Council of Elders. At the annual meeting, the voting members shall elect elders and deacons (if deemed necessary by the Council of Elders), receive the annual budget, and transact any other business as may come before the meeting.
- 14:2** Special meetings of the congregation shall be called at a date and location to be determined by the Council of Elders whenever the Council of Elders deems it to be in the best interests of the church or when requested in writing to do so by one-fourth (1/4) of the voting members of the church in good standing.
- 14:3** The date, time, and location of all congregational meetings must be announced orally or in the church bulletin at least two (2) Sundays prior to the time set for the meeting, or by letter mailed at least ten days prior to the meeting. If the voting members adjourn any congregational meeting to a different date, time, or place, notice of a new date, time, and place need not be given if the new date, time, and place is announced before adjournment.
- 14:4** The purpose of a congregational meeting shall be stated upon the announcement of the meeting. Such called congregational meetings may be called for the purpose of:
- a. a proposed amendment to the bylaws or articles of incorporation;
 - b. the election of officers;
 - c. the calling of the pastor;
 - d. the acquisition or disposition of property worth more than \$5,000;

- e. the dissolution of the church; or
- f. a question regarding the church's denominational affiliation.

When a meeting is called for the transaction of specific matters of business, no business shall be conducted except that which is stated in the notice.

- 14:5** A member's attendance at a meeting: waives the member's right to object to lack of notice or defective notice of the meeting, unless the member at the beginning of the meeting objects to holding the meeting or transacting business at the meeting; and, waives the member's right to object to consideration of a particular matter at the meeting that is not within the purpose or purposes described in the meeting notice, unless the member objects to considering the matter when it is presented.
- 14:6** One-fourth (1/4) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum at congregational meetings. Unless provided otherwise in these Bylaws, a majority vote of those in attendance, a quorum being present, is sufficient to decide any matter.
- 14:7** The moderator and the clerk of the Council of Elders shall serve as moderator and clerk respectively in congregational meetings.

Article 15 -- Church Records

- 15:1** The Council of Elders shall keep the following records:
(1) minutes of its meetings, including a record of the administration of the sacraments and changes in the membership of the congregation; (2) minutes of the meetings of the congregation; (3) rolls of the members in the congregation (communicant, and voting), with the dates of their reception; (4) resolutions adopted by the Council of Elders; (5) appropriate accounting records; (6) its articles or restated articles of incorporation and all amendments to them currently in effect; and (7) its Bylaws or restated bylaws and all amendments to them currently in effect.
- 15:2** A member shall be entitled to inspect and copy, at a reasonable time and location specified by the Council of Elders, any of the church records described above, provided the Council of Elders finds that the member has a proper purpose and is acting in good faith. The Council of Elders may limit access to any records that contain confidential information about a particular person or people.

Article 16 -- Relational Commitments

16:1 Relationships in the church will be guided and governed by the biblical principles set forth in a document entitled “*Relational Commitments*,” which is incorporated into these Bylaws by reference. This document establishes our commitments related to peacemaking and reconciliation, preserving marriages, protecting children, biblical counseling, confidentiality, accountability, and church discipline. These commitments shall apply both to members and to regular worshippers of our church, and may be amended from time to time in the same way that these Bylaws may be amended.

Article 17 – The Sacraments of the Church

17:1 Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits; and to confirm our interest in Him. They place a visible difference between those that belong to the Church from those that belong to the world. Sacraments are given to the Church by God as a means of graces to engage members of the Church to serve heartily our Covenant Lord according to His Word. In the New Covenant age God has given the Church two perpetual sacraments: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Baptism:

17:2 Baptism is the sign and seal of the New Covenant of grace by which members are solemnly admitting into the covenant community, the Church. It is a sign of the covenant member’s engrafting into Christ, the Holy Spirit’s work of regeneration, of forgiveness of sins by the atoning work of Christ, and of the member’s commitment to walk in newness of life in faith and fidelity to Christ Jesus, our Lord.

17:3 The outward element in baptism is water. Furthermore, the baptismal candidate is to be baptized, “*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*” according the Scriptural warrant of Matthew 28.

17:4 Immersion of the baptismal candidate under water is not necessary to the ordinance; therefore baptism can be and is properly administered by pouring or sprinkling of water.

17:5 Those who profess faith in and obedience to Christ, and also covenant children within the household of one, or both, professing parents, are proper recipients of baptism. The baptism of covenant children born (or adopted) into Christian homes should not be unnecessarily delayed.

- 17:6** The sacrament of Baptism is to be administered to a person only but once.
- 17:7** Ordinarily only members in good standing of the church may request of the Council of Elders for their covenant children to be baptized. Extra-ordinary requests must be approved by the Council of Elders with sufficient explanation of their relationship to Christ and His Church made satisfactory to the Council of Elders.
- 17:8** The day of the baptism having arrived the minister (or elder, if no minister is available) shall exhort the parents of their Christian duty to nurture their covenant child(ren) in the Christian faith. The minister shall then publically proclaim the covenant promises from the Scriptures:

For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. (Acts 2:39)

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. (Gen. 17:7)

Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy household. (Acts 16:31)

The minister shall then propose the following questions:

- 1. Do you acknowledge your child's need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?**
- 2. Do you claim God's covenant promises in (his/her) behalf, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for (his/her) salvation, as you do for your own?**
- 3. Do you now unreservedly dedicate your child to God, and promise, in humble reliance upon divine grace, that you will endeavor to set before (him/her) a godly example, that you will pray with and for (him/her), that you will teach (him/her) the doctrines of our holy faith, and that you will strive, by all the means of God's appointment, to bring (him/her) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?**

The minister shall then ask the members of the church within the congregation:

Do you, the members of this church, undertake the responsibility of assisting these parent(s) in the Christian nurture of this child? If so, please stand.

The sacrament of baptism continues with prayer for God's blessing to attend the sacrament, then the minister shall say:

(Name), child of the covenant, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

As the words of Christian baptism are pronounced the baptismal candidate is baptized with water. The sacrament of Christian Baptism is concluded with a prayer asking for God's blessing and help to be with the parent(s) and child(ren).

- 17:9** Unbaptized adults and unbaptized children of discretion seeking membership into the church must make a credible profession of faith before the Council of Elders prior to their baptism and reception into membership of the church.

Upon the day of their baptism during a regular service of worship the minister may address those making a profession in the following terms:

You being here present to make a public profession of faith, are to assent to the following declarations and promises, by which you enter into a solemn covenant with God and His Church.

The Minister shall then address the baptismal candidate with the following membership vows:

- 1. Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the inerrant and infallible Word of God, and that its teaching is the only perfect and true way of salvation-**
- 2. Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving his wrath and judgment, and that you are without hope except in God's sovereign love and mercy to save you.**
- 3. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, trust that He is the only Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rely upon Him alone for your acceptance before God and your salvation as He is offered in the Gospel.**
- 4. Do you resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to put to death the misdeeds and desires of your sinful nature and to live your life as is fitting a true follower of Jesus Christ.**

- 5. Do you promise to support the church in its worship and ministry to the best of your ability.**
- 6. Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to strive for and pursue its purity and peace.**

The Lord's Supper:

- 17:10** The other New Covenant sacrament is the Lord's Supper, in which by the giving and receiving of bread and wine (or grape juice if conscience dictates), according to Christ's institution, Jesus' death is declared. Covenant members are worthy to receive the Lord's Supper and when in faith they receive Christ's body given to them and His blood shed for them, they thereby feast upon Jesus Christ in covenant renewal and receive through this means of grace the benefits of union with Christ and spiritual nourishment unto our growth in grace.
- 17:11** As a covenant renewal feast the Lord's Supper is to be observed in the church frequently, if not weekly, until our Lord returns for our further engagement in and commitment to all duties which we as Christians owe to our Lord and Savior. The Lord's Supper is a bond and pledge of the covenant community's communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His body, the Church.
- 17:12** It is proper that public notice be given to the congregation, at least one week before the administration of this sacrament, so that the people of God might be properly instructed and thus make proper preparation to receive the sacrament in faith and with understanding suitable to their spiritual maturity.
- 17:13** The sacrament is properly administered by a minister of the gospel (or by an elder if a minister is not available) as part of a regular service of worship. Private observances are not generally permitted except in those cases when members are hospitalized, homebound, or in long-term care, thus prohibiting their regular weekly worship with the people of God.
- 17:14** On the day of the observance of the Lord's Supper, when the sermon is ended, the minister shall properly prepare communicants to come to the Table of the Lord in the following or like manner:

- a. the words of institution are to be read, either from one of the Evangelists, or from 1 Corinthians 11;
- b. words of memorial are proclaimed until Jesus comes again declaring our Savior's death in the sacrament of His body given and His blood shed;
- c. exhortations are offered to strengthen God's people against sin; to support them under troubles; to encourage and quicken them in their duty; to inspire them with love and zeal; to increase their faith, and holy resolution; and to comfort them in peace of conscience, and sure hope of eternal life according to Christ's promise;
- d. words of invitation are extended and worshippers welcomed to the Table to those who have been baptized into Christ and who are seeking by God's grace to live faithfully and obediently unto Him for God's glory;
- e. a special invitation to non-communing worshippers to remain during the service and give meditation of their need for Christ may be offered prior to the observance.

17:15 The Table being furnished with bread and wine, and the communicants orderly and gravely sitting around it (or in their seats before it), the elders in a convenient place together, the minister shall set the elements apart to their holy use by prayer and thanksgiving. Then the minister may say:

That the Lord Jesus Christ on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, gave it to His disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

Here the bread is to be distributed. After having given the bread, the minister shall take the cup, and say:

In the same manner also after the supper, Jesus took the cup, and having given thanks, He gave it to the disciples, saying, "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Drink it, all of you."

Here the cup is given to the elders who distribute it to the communicants.

After everyone has been served the minister is to pray and give thanks to God, with these or like words:

Almighty and everlasting Lord God, we heartily offer our thanksgiving to Thee because in Thy great love Thou hast fed us at Thy Table with this spiritual food, and hast assured us of Thy goodness to us. Thou has granted us in Thy gracious covenant that we are members of the Body of Christ and of that blessed company of all faithful people, and heirs by grace of Thine everlasting kingdom. We pray, our Heavenly Father, that Thou might assist us with Thy grace so that we may continue in this holy fellowship, and live henceforth to Thy glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns and is worshipped with Thee, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

An offering for the poor or other sacred purpose is appropriate in connection with this sacramental service, and may be received at such times as ordered by the Council of Elders.

The worship service is concluded with the singing of a psalm or hymn, a Biblical benediction and commission.

Article 18 – Church Discipline

18:1 Church discipline shall be carried out as explained in our *Relational Commitments* and the *Guidelines for Church Discipline* approved by the Council of Elders.

Article 19 – Ownership and Distribution of Property

19:1 The church shall hold, own, and enjoy its own personal and real property, without any right of reversion to another entity, except as provided in these Bylaws. Should the church decide to withdraw from any denominational affiliation, the church shall retain ownership of its property. Such withdrawal shall not be considered to be a *dissolution of the church*. [see Article 19:2]

19:2 "*Dissolution*" means the complete disbanding of the church so that it no longer functions as a congregation or as a corporate entity. Upon the dissolution of the church, its property shall be applied and distributed as follows:

- a. all liabilities and obligations of the church shall be paid and discharged or adequate provision shall be made therefore;
- b. assets held by the church upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements;
- c. assets received and not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance by reason of the dissolution, shall be transferred or conveyed to one or more domestic or foreign corporations, societies, or organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the responding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and are engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the corporation; this distribution shall be done pursuant to a plan adopted by the Council of Elders, provided that no assets are distributed to any organization governed by a member of the Council of Elders; and
- d. any assets not otherwise disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, for such purposes and to such organizations as said court shall determine, provided such organizations are part of the a denomination.

Article 20 – Indemnification of Officers

- 20:1** The Council of Elders may choose to indemnify and advance the church-related expenses of any officer, employee, or agent of the church.
- 20:2** Subject to the provisions of paragraph c. of this section, the church shall indemnify any elder or deacon or former elder or deacon of the church against claims, liabilities, expenses, and costs necessarily or prudently incurred by him in connection with the defense, compromise, or settlement of any action, suit or proceeding, civil or criminal, in which such person is made a party by reason of being or having been an elder or deacon, to the extent not otherwise compensated, indemnified or reimbursed by insurance, if:
- a. The conduct of the elder or deacon was in good faith;
 - b. The elder or deacon reasonably believed that his conduct was in the best interests of the church, or at least not opposed to its best interests; and

c. In the case of any criminal proceeding, the elder or deacon had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.

20:3 The church may not indemnify an elder or deacon in connection with a proceeding brought against him by or in the right of the church, in which he was adjudged liable to the church, or where the elder or deacon is charged with receiving an improper personal benefit and he is adjudged liable on that basis.

Article 21 – Denominational Affiliation

21-1 In light of our church's reception by Athanasius Presbytery of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC) in 2017 this constitution shall hereby be amended to be consistent with the currently amended governing documents consisting of the CREC *Constitution*, Athanasius Presbytery's *Book of Procedures* and *Book of Memorials*.

21-2 Christ Redeemer Presbyterian Church retains the right to withdraw as a congregation from any presbytery or denomination upon a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority recommendation of the Council of Elders and a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote by the congregation at a regularly called meeting of the congregation.

Article 22 – Rules of Order

22:1 All meetings of the church, the Council of Elders, and its various boards and committees shall be conducted pursuant to the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Article 23 – Amendment of the Constitution

23:1 These Bylaws may be amended or repealed only by a majority vote of two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) or greater of the voting members present at a duly called congregational meeting of the church called for such purposes.

