

CHRIST REFORMED  
EVANGELICAL CHURCH

CONSTITUTION  
*of*  
MEMBERSHIP

# CHRIST REFORMED EVANGELICAL CHURCH

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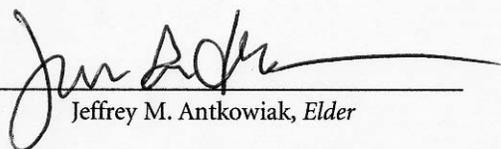
The Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches

[www.crechurches.org](http://www.crechurches.org)

*The CREC Constitution is approved by the Session of Christ Reformed Evangelical Church*



H. Kenneth Trovato, Elder



Jeffrey M. Antkowiak, Elder

## Table of Contents

Preamble .....	1
<b>Article I: Members and Electors</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>a. Members</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>b. Household Membership</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>c. Communicant Members and         Non-Communicant Members of Member Households</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>d. Leaving CREC</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>e. Electors</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>f. Covenant Communion</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Article II: Selection of Elders and Deacons</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>a. Elders</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Installation of Elders</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>b. Deacons</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Article III: Duties of Church Officers</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>a. Elders</b> .....	<b>8</b>
1) <i>Responsibilities of Elders</i> .....	8
2) <i>Conduct of Elders Meetings</i> .....	9
3) <i>Responsibilities of Individual Elders</i> .....	9
4) <i>Compensation</i> .....	9
<b>b. Deacons</b> .....	<b>10</b>
1) <i>Responsibilities of Deacons</i> .....	10
2) <i>Conduct of Deacons Meetings</i> .....	10
3) <i>Responsibilities of Individual Deacons</i> .....	10
<b>c. Resignation of Elders or Deacons</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Article IV: Removal of Elders or Deacons</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>a. Elders</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>b. Deacons</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Article V: Discipline</b>	
<b>a. The Nature of Discipline</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>b. Types of Discipline</b> .....	<b>12</b>
1) <i>Informal Discipline</i> .....	12
2) <i>Formal Discipline</i> .....	12
3) <i>Those Subject to the Benefits and Blessings of Biblical Discipline</i> .....	12
4) <i>Children of Member Households</i> .....	13
5) <i>Prerequisites for Formal Discipline</i> .....	13
6) <i>Restoration</i> .....	13
<b>Article VI: Subordinate Ministries</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Article VII: Incorporation</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Article VIII: 501(c)(3) Information and Disolution Clause</b> .....	<b>14</b>

# CHRIST REFORMED EVANGELICAL CHURCH

## *Constitution*

### **Preamble**

In the church of God all things are to be done decently and in order. This pertains to the government of the church and congregational development as much as to the Biblically prescribed 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 this congregation, here designated as Christ Reformed Evangelical Church. These standards are not an attempt to supplant Scripture, but rather are our expression of how we understand the duty to practice Biblical church government under God. While drawn from Scripture these standards are primarily procedural; the doctrinal position of the church may be found in the 1647 edition of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*.

The purpose of this church is to glorify God through Biblically prescribed and defined corporate worship. This purpose is supported by the recruitment of worshippers through the proclamation of the gospel of Christ and His kingdom to sinners, through the building up of the saints through expositional, doctrinal and applicatory preaching and teaching of the whole counsel of God, and through doing good works which will glorify our Father in heaven and reflect His character.

### **Article I: Members and Electors**

#### **A. Members**

The organization of membership outlined below is designed solely for the purpose of maintaining scriptural and accountable local church government (*Heb. 13:17*), such that our affairs are conducted in decency and order (*1 Cor. 14:40*). In no way is our practice of membership to be construed in such a way as to disrupt our Christian unity and fellowship with true saints who attend church elsewhere (*Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 3:1-4*).

#### **B. Household Membership**

1. Membership in this local church will be normally reckoned by household. A household will be eligible for membership when the head of that household (husband or single head) meets the following criteria.
  - (a) He professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (*Rom. 10:9-10*) and repents of his sin (*Jer. 25:5, Ezek 18:30, Mk 1:5*);
  - (b) He does not contradict his profession through his manner of life (*Matt. 7:22-23; 1 Cor. 5:13*);
  - (c) He has been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*Matt. 28:19*);
  - (d) He considers his permanent residence to be within reasonable distance of our location which will allow faithful attendance without undue or unsustainable burden (*Eph. 1:1*);
  - (e) He willingly submits himself by vows to the government and discipline of this church (*Heb. 13:7,17*);
  - (f) He willingly commits himself and his family (physically, financially and spiritually) to supporting the worship and work of CREC.

2. The elders in session may admit eligible households and/or individuals into membership in CREC based upon hearing and assessing the testimony of the head of the household and/or the individual(s) seeking membership in CREC. Since the session, as mere men cannot read hearts (*Jer 17:9,10*), they are to require the candidate's profession of faith to be clearly articulated and credible as measured by the gospel in order to be admissible. Admission into membership also requires that the candidate be—or show that they have been—properly baptized by a Christian church. There is, however, no testimony necessary for infants of covenant households.

Those seeking membership who make a credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but who have not been baptized in a Christian church may be accepted into membership only after being baptized. Letters of transfer from another Christian church will be accepted, but will not mitigate the requirement to meet with the elders in session for their faith to be professed and examined for credibility as measured by the gospel.

3. The elders will maintain a membership list, with a household listed in the manner indicated below. This membership list will be maintained by the elders, and kept separate from the church directory of addresses and phone numbers. When a head of household is accepted into the membership of this church, his household will be listed with him. Communicant members of the church in each household will be documented.

*x. Fred Abbott and his household (His wife Miriam, and children, John and Susan)*

A woman without a husband may serve as a head of a household, thus:

*y. Lydia Benson and her household (Children, Sandra and Jessica)*

If an individual satisfies the criteria listed above, but has no family, or member/s of his family refuse to believe, then he will be accepted as an individual member of this church. The elders will list his membership in the following manner:

*z. John Carston*

4. The elders of the church recognize, through admitting the head of the household into such membership, that he carries the primary responsibility before God for knowing and shaping the spiritual condition of that household. Recognizing that role does not transfer the authority and use of the keys of the kingdom from the elders into the hands of heads of households—but does make it incumbent upon them to make recommendations to the elders concerning members of his household on such matters as baptism, the Lord's Supper, and church discipline. According to Scripture and under the headship of Christ, the administration of church ordinances and discipline remains with the elders. In such administration, the elders are to strongly consider the spiritual responsibility of the head of the household.
5. Because water baptism is required of those seeking membership, the following guidelines will apply. When someone is brought to faith and makes profession of that faith in Christ, he should be immediately instructed on the subject of baptism, and subsequently baptized if he was not properly baptized as an infant or child. When an unbaptized Christian comes to this church, he will be instructed on his responsibility to be baptized at the first opportunity, and subsequently baptized. He will not be admitted into membership in this congregation until he is baptized. Baptisms are administered at CREC only by the teaching elders using the mode of pouring, or sprinkling.

When a baptized Christian moves to this church, the elders must verify and acknowledge his baptism as Christian baptism in receiving him into the membership of this church.

If the baptism was administered by an apostate church, or a non-Christian sect or cult, as officially declared by the elders of the church in session, the individual will be instructed on his responsibility to be properly baptized. This is not rebaptism. At the first opportunity following proper instruction on baptism and upon his readiness to receive this sign and seal of the covenant of grace, he will subsequently be baptized. As an act of an ecclesiastical government, a valid baptism does not depend upon the personal integrity of the elder administering the baptism, or the doctrinal and moral integrity of the administering church. Nevertheless, if the doctrinal and moral corruption of that church are so far advanced as to require our elders to consider that church to be not a Christian church at all, then the baptisms administered by such a church will not be recognized as valid. But given the complexity of all such issues, the elders will deal with each situation on a case-by-case basis.

### **C. Communicant Members and Noncommunicant Members of Member Households**

1. Those members of households who have not professed faith in the Lord and/or shown ability to discern the body and blood of Christ as symbolized in the sacrament, are not to come to the Lord's Table but are recognized by the elders of the church to be non-communicant members of member households.
2. Members of households who have been baptized in water, have professed faith in the Lord, and demonstrated the ability to discern the body and blood of Christ as symbolized in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are permitted and encouraged to come to the Table and are considered by the elders of the church to be communicant members of the church, and recognized as communicant members of member households. They are to be administered the following vows of membership publicly at a regular worship service.

## ◆ MEMBERSHIP VOWS

Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope except in His sovereign mercy?

Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered to you in the Gospel?

Do you here and now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will strive to live all of your life in the way that is fitting for a follower of Christ and which brings glory to Him?

Do you promise to support this Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?  
*(note that support is far more than the tithe, but understand that the tithe—the tenth—is obliged to the storehouse (the Church) and is expected and not designatable. Any offering to this church over and above the tithe may be designated to specific needs with permission from the session.)*

Are you willing to submit yourself to the government and discipline of this Church, and do you promise to strive earnestly for its purity and peace?

Will you refrain from the sin of gossip (*James 3:10*) and grumbling (*Phil 2:14*) and boldly strive to be at peace and in fellowship with all of your brethren at all times to the best of your ability?

#### ***D. Leaving CREC***

It is to be understood that in a congregation which by faith offers vows of personal responsibility to the Lord, to one another, and to the elder's oversight and care in the Lord, there are four ways to properly leave the fellowship of CREC.

- The first is when God calls His people from this life and they are carried to their eternal home and place of uninterrupted worship before the throne of God through death.
- When for various and sundry reasons a member of CREC needs or wants to transfer to another Bible believing Church. Said member will be dismissed into the care of the new body's ecclesiastical officers and fellowship of that congregation by the officers of this church.
- If CREC becomes an unacceptable place of worship due to making changes away from biblical doctrine, then a member may write a letter declaring his theological scruple. After proper attention and action by the elders in session, the member may be released into the care of another Bible believing fellowship with the full knowledge and approval of that body's ecclesiastical officers.
- Lastly, a person may be removed from membership, barred from the table of the Lord, and declared judicially to not be a Christian when through due process (described in detail in Article V.) he is found to be unrepentant and/or unbelieving.

***E. Electors*** – Those members of CREC who vote in church elections shall be called electors.

##### ***1. Qualifications for electors:***

Electors of CREC are those who are heads of member households. Unmarried members who are independent of their parents may be considered as a head-of-household for purposes of voting.

##### ***2. Authority of electors:***

Electors may vote in the elections of elders and deacons and at other times when the elders put a situations or questions forward for consideration.

##### ***3. Qualified electors:***

The elders will qualify electors. Three weeks prior to any election to church office, the election will be announced and the ballot will be provided to the electors. Those who desire to vote but who do not receive a ballot may contact the elders. If qualified, they will be provided a ballot in time for that election.

##### ***4. Elections:***

Elections will be posted—and thereafter conducted—at appropriate times.

##### ***5. Head of household meetings:***

The congregation will hold regular head of household meetings, which will be the normal channel through which the elders and deacons receive information and advice from the church. The results of such meetings will be published in either the form of minutes or a report.

## F. Covenant Communion

### 1. *Who may participate?*

The Lord's Supper is for all the Lord's people. We practice "*covenant communion*," that is, we encourage all baptized Christians (not censured under church discipline) to partake of the Lord's Table and so commune with Christ in His body. The Supper should be received by all baptized covenant members who are able to partake of the bread and drink the wine, including young children being raised in the discipline and admonition of the Lord. We deny that an artificial standard of age or mental capacity is consistent with the Biblical basis for partaking of the Supper.

Under the headship of Christ, the responsibility for administering the sacraments remains with the session. However, for those that differ with this view, the session shall defer to the view of the head of each household, as to when their covenant children will commune.

### 2. *Administering the Lord's Supper*

Ministers of the Word should ordinarily lead in the administration of the Sacraments, yet we believe that it is permissible for the sacraments to be administered with the oversight of any elder, lawfully ordained.

## Article II: Selection of Elders and Deacons

### A. *Elders*

To hold the office of elder, a candidate must be a male member of CREC, meet all of the Biblical requirements for elder found primarily in 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1 and 1 Peter 5; etc. and subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647, freely and honestly agreeing that it faithfully confesses the truths of scripture. The officer or officer candidate must additionally hold to and propagate a consistent eschatology, soteriology, Christology, etc. (*Phil 2:2*) demonstrating that these truths are precious and prominent in his life and thinking, and that he will, with aggressive winsomeness, teach such to this congregation.

As wonderful a work of God's grace as it is to be so convinced, just holding these beliefs does not alone mean that a man is called or gifted by God to lead His church. The goal of this Church is that every person would be so theologically qualified while at the same time recognizing that it is God who calls, equips, qualifies, and sanctifies a man to office in His church.

Elections will be held from time to time as God moves members of the congregation to recognize gifts in individual male members of the Church and nominate them to the office of elder. A qualified male may be considered as a potential elder in several ways. He may aspire to the office (*1 Timothy 3:1*) and nominate himself or any communing member of the church (except those presently holding office—who are restricted from making nominations) may suggest a name to the elders. Once he becomes a candidate, the elders will seek to prepare and 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*).

A man properly nominated (by the bringing forward by any communing member to the session) must be placed on the ballot and an election held in due time unless the man removes himself from the ballot. At the time of election, the moderator of the session will report to the congregation the recommendations and advice of the elders which must be obtained by at least three-fourths majority in regard to the candidate's fitness and abilities. A recommendation with reasons from the session whether to vote "yes" or "no" will be given to the congregation without ambiguity. No debate from the floor will be admitted and no minority report from the session will be allowed at this meeting without the prior consent of three-fourths of the Session members. Once on the ballot, the electors of the church have the option of voting either "yes" or "no."

If through at least three-fourths majority of votes the candidate receives the confidence and support of the church as represented (Philippians 2:1-4), the session will ordain the elder elect to the ministry and office through the administration of public vows, laying on of hands, and prayer.

The requirement for at least three-fourths majority of votes may only be set aside through the consent of a three-fourths majority of the elders in session, and then only after the elders have met with those who objected, and carefully considered their objections in the light of Scripture. The elders, in submission to the brethren, will set aside such objections if it is clear the objections are unscriptural or unwarranted. At the same time, refusal to overturn these objections does not constitute agreement with the objections on the part of the elders.

If the objections are overturned, then the elders will meet with the electors to discuss the elder's decision.

If a candidate for office is not elected, then the elders will meet with him within one week to discuss the election, and answer any questions the denied candidate might have.

Once installed, the elder will serve for life, unless he resigns or is removed.

***Installation of elders:***

After a Teaching-Elder preaches an appropriate sermon, the ruling elder elect will make the following vows to God in the presence of the congregation as part of his installation to office.

1. Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the eldership in this congregation from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory through the Gospel of His Son?
2. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
3. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, as accurately expressing what is taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any portion of the Confession, you will, on your initiative, make known to the Session any change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?
4. Do you believe in the personal and bodily return of Christ as described in the scriptures?
5. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Scriptures and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?
6. Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of Christ Reformed Evangelical Church and believe them to be in conformity with biblical polity?
7. Do you willingly accept the office of elder, in this church, and promise by God's grace to faithfully engage in all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the high calling of elder in all areas of your life, whether personal or relational, private or public, setting a worthy example, and walking with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make you overseer?
8. Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
9. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the church?
10. Are you now willing before the God of heaven and earth to take responsibility for the charge of this church, agreeable to your declaration when accepting their call? And do you, relying upon God for strength, promise to discharge to it the duties of an elder?

***The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the presiding minister shall propose to the church the following questions:***

1. Do you, the people of Christ Reformed Evangelical Church, continue to profess your readiness to receive \_\_\_\_\_ (elder elect name) \_\_\_\_\_, whom you have called to be an elder?
2. Do you promise to receive the Word of Truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?
3. Do you promise to encourage him in his labors, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?

The people having answered these questions in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands and saying “Amen,” the candidate shall kneel, and the presiding minister shall, with prayer accompanied by the laying on of hands of the elders in session, according to the apostolic example, solemnly set him apart to the holy office of the eldership. Prayer being ended, the elder elect shall rise from his knees; and the presiding minister shall first, followed by all members of the Presbytery, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this effect:

*We give you the right hand of fellowship (Gal. 2:9), to take part in this ministry with us.*

The presiding minister shall then say:

*I now pronounce and declare that Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ (elder elect name) \_\_\_\_\_ has been regularly elected, ordained, and installed to the office of elder of this congregation, agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the Constitution of Christ Reformed Evangelical Church; and that as such he is entitled to all biblical encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

After which the minister presiding, or some other teaching or ruling elder appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge to the elder and to the congregation, to persevere in the discharge of their reciprocal duties. After prayer and the singing of a psalm or hymn, the congregation shall be dismissed with a benediction.

## **B. Deacons**

Elections will be held from time to time as God moves members of the congregation to recognize gifts in men of the Church and nominate them to an office. A qualified man may be considered as a potential deacon in several ways. He may aspire to the office (1 Timothy 3:1) or any communing member of the church (except those presently holding office who are restricted from making nominations) may submit his name to the elders. Once he becomes a candidate, the elders and deacons will train and examine the candidate with regard to his measure of wisdom and mercy, as well as his doctrine and manner of life. The deacons will include the candidate in their regular work in order to prove his fitness for the office (1 Timothy 3:10). If the candidate has any disagreement or mental reservation about any portion of the church’s Statement of Faith or Constitution, it is his duty to inform the elders and deacons of it. All candidates must meet the qualifications for the office set down in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

A man properly nominated must be placed on the ballot and an election held in due time. At the time of the election the moderator of the session and chairman of the diaconate will report to the congregation on the candidate’s fitness and abilities. A recommendation whether to vote “yes” or “no” will be given to the congregation without ambiguity. No debate will be admitted and no minority report will be allowed at this meeting without the prior consent of the session of elders and diaconate. Once on the ballot, the electors of the church have the option of voting either “yes” or “no.”

If through at least three-fourths majority of votes the candidate receives the confidence and support of the church as represented (Philippians 2:1-4), the elders and deacons will ordain the new deacon to the office through the administration of public vows, laying on of hands, and prayer.

The requirement for at least three-fourths majority of votes may only be set aside through the unanimous consent of the elders and deacons, and then only after the elders have met with those who objected, and carefully considered their objections in the light of Scripture. They will set aside such objections in submission to the brethren if it is clear the objections are unscriptural or unwarranted. At the same time, refusal to overturn these objections does not constitute agreement with the objections on the part of the elders or deacons.

If the objections are overturned, then the elders will meet with the congregation to discuss the decision.

If a candidate for deacon is not elected, then the elders and deacons will meet with him within one week to discuss the election, and answer any questions the denied candidate might have.

Once installed, the deacon will serve for life, unless he resigns or is removed.

An ordination service tailored for the office of deacon will be conducted in similar fashion to that of elder.

## **Article III: Duties of Church Officers**

### ***A. Elders***

#### **1. Responsibilities of Elders:**

The elders are collectively responsible to oversee the following:

- (a) Seeing to it that corporate and family worship are prescriptive and vertical (aimed toward God, not man) do all to the glory of God.  
(1 Corinthians 10: 31; John 4: 23-24)
- (b) Clarifying, promoting, and protecting Biblical vision and purpose.  
(Matthew 28: 18-20)
- (c) Ruling/shepherding (1 Peter 5:1-4).
- (d) Equipping (Ephesians 4:11-12).
- (e) Prayer/fasting (Acts 6:4; 13:1-3).
- (f) Teaching/preaching/disciple making (1 Timothy 5:17; Matthew 28: 18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2).
- (g) Administration of the sacraments of baptism and communion  
(Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
- (h) Exercising the keys of the kingdom in administering church discipline and restoration (1 Corinthians 5:1-5).
- (i) Prayer for the healing of the sick when called upon in faith (James 5:14-15).

- (j) Delegating responsibilities to the deacons, the employment of the church staff, defining the responsibilities of church staff, and delegating responsibilities to the staff of subordinate ministries. This is to include the responsibilities of the budget.
- (k) Commission and/or license ministerial students, and oversee the course of their training for the eldership. Under the guidance and oversight of the elders, such commissioned individuals will have the opportunity to perform most of the various ministerial functions of elders, with participation in the rule of the church, administration of the sacraments, and judging cases of discipline being the main exceptions.

## **2. Conduct of Elders' meetings:**

All usual business of the elders will be conducted at their regular meetings, or at special meetings called for a particular purpose. The chairman/moderator position is to be filled by an elder of Christ Reformed Evangelical Church, adhering to the stipulations of conduct as prescribed in Roberts Rules of Order, pertaining to the governing of all session meetings (all matters concerning the session). A clerk of session will be appointed to record the minutes of the meetings.

## **3. Responsibilities of Individual Elders:**

Elders are responsible for those duties delegated to them by the body of elders, and recorded in the minutes, with due regard to their gifts and desires. Elders with such a charge must serve willingly, and without being domineering in the discharge of their assigned duties, whether pastoral or administrative (1 Peter 5:1-3). There is no distinction of rank within the body of elders.

Under Christ, the highest authority in the local church is the board of elders in session. Though there are various gifts and strengths among different elders, all share the same rank, authority, and obligation to holiness of life without distinction. Nevertheless, the church acknowledges the variety of gifts and callings God gives to men, and recognizes that some of the elders, though equal in rank and authority, are especially gifted and called to preach the Word, and to teach right doctrine (1 Tim. 5:17-18); and they are to make that labor their priority.

This church recognizes two distinct callings or offices related to the session of elders for the local church. The first is to a pastoral ministry of the Word, and termed "teaching elder, minister, or pastor" (Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 5:2-4). The second is called to government and rule according to the Word, termed a ruler or ruling elder (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7,17; Rom. 12:8; 1 Cor. 12:28). The names used for these callings are descriptive only, and not titular or honorific (Matt. 23:8-10). The ruling elders principally function in the government of the church, though they should have the ability to teach (1 Tim 3:2). The teachers share this rule, and are also responsible for teaching and instruction from the Word. The ministers share in the rule of the church, and in addition are principally responsible for the proclamation of the Word on the Lord's Day, as well as the general oversight of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Each elder's gifts will be examined and he will have his calling and office routinely examined and if found fit reaffirmed by the elders in session.

In all meetings of the session of presbyters, each elder has one vote. In their capacity as a session, the elders oversee all the affairs of the church, including the labors of teachers and ministers.

## **4. Compensation:**

Those elders whose assigned duties preclude them from providing for their families in the ordinary or vocational way are to be compensated by the church for such service (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

## **B. Deacons**

### **1. Responsibilities of Deacons:**

Under the general oversight of the elders, the deacons will be made aware of ways to demonstrate good works and mercy that God might receive the glory (*Matthew 5:16*) and manage the financial, physical, social, and benevolent functions of the church (*Acts 6:2-4*). Such responsibilities include: preparing, working with the session toward approval of the budget, administering that budget, maintenance of buildings, arranging fellowship meals, administration of subordinate ministries, office support, and administering the deacon's fund.

### **2. Conduct of Deacons' 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. The deacons will be prepared to give a general report of their work at each of the monthly men's meetings, they will provide a quarterly financial report to the church, and they will give an annual report to the elders with proposals for the upcoming year.

### **3. Responsibilities of Individual Deacons:**

Deacons are responsible for those duties assigned to them by the board of deacons and/or elders in session, and recorded in their minutes respectively, with due regard to their gifts and desires. There is no distinction of rank among the deacons.

## **C. Resignation of Elders or Deacons**

If an elder or deacon desires to resign his office, or to take a leave of absence, he will present a letter expressing this desire and explaining his reasons to the board of elders. He is responsible to do so in reference to his vows of office and his calling. The elders will notify the heads of households of the church by the head of household meeting following the receipt of their letter. If the desire of the elder or deacon concerned is unchanged, then the elders will read a statement to the assembly disclosing the session's opinion and action concerning the resignation, or the details of the leave of absence.

If a resignation is sought for reasons of moral or doctrinal turpitude, then the elders, bound by scripture, must exercise Biblical discipline prior to, or in conjunction with, any consideration of the letter of resignation. (1 Tim 5:19-21)

Each case will be measured by the respective vows in the light of Scripture.

## Article IV: Removal of Elders and Deacons

### A. Elders

If one of the saints 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 alone and individually first (*Matthew 18:15*), if the issue is not resolved adequately, then two or three others are to be included and are to hear the issue for the first time in the presence of both parties (*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 doctrinal or moral in nature, and if the other elders decide that the question merits an investigation and/or trial, then they will (a) inform the heads of household of the church of the nature of the charges, (b) announce the date(s) of the scheduled investigation and/or trial, and (c) encourage the heads to attend.

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

### B. Deacons

If one of the saints 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 doctrinal or moral in nature, and if the elders unanimously decide that the question merits an investigation and/or trial, then they will (a) inform the men of the church of the nature of the charges, (b) announce the date(s) of the scheduled investigation and/or trial, and (c) encourage the men to attend.

If the charges are 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*).

## Article V. Discipline

### A. *The Nature of Discipline*

Discipline is a censure or correction that is required of the church by Scripture for the purpose of simple obedience. Church discipline is a matter of unique sensitivity that has historically been neither consistently nor properly conducted, thus bringing reproach upon the church. Discipline will therefore be given serious attention by this church .

### B. *Types of Discipline*

#### **1. Informal discipline:**

Informal discipline is that which is applied by individual members or by a part of the church, without the action of the elders or the church as a body. The elders will, through teaching and example, encourage the members to discipline one another through the following practices:

- (a) Exercising self-discipline; e.g. applying self-correction (*1 Cor. 11:31 and 2 Tim. 3:16-17*).
- (b) Overlooking, in love, the failings of one another (*1 Peter 4:8*).
- (c) Admonishing a brother when necessary (*Matthew 18:15*).
- (d) Taking one or two others as witnesses if the admonition is rejected (*Matthew 18:16*).
- (e) Bringing the issue to the church through the elders if the admonition is rejected (*Matthew 18:17*).

#### **2. Formal Discipline:**

Formal church discipline consists of excommunicate censure. One under discipline is to be considered and treated as any other unbeliever (*Matthew 18:17*). Formal discipline is initiated by Scriptural procedures.

#### **3. Those Subject to the Benefits and Blessings of Biblical Discipline:**

- (a) Communicant Members: Those who meet the criteria of communicant membership according to Article I, Section A of the CREC Constitution.
- (b) Non-members: Professing Christians who attend CREC regularly but who are not members.
- (c) Professing Christians under discipline by other churches: If another church has disciplined one of its members, and that person subsequently desires attendance and/or membership at CREC, the elders of CREC will honor the discipline of the adjudicating church until—after due consultation with the person concerned and appropriate information is obtained from the disciplining church—there proves to be cause for appeal. If such cause is found, transfer of jurisdiction may be requested of the censuring court and careful retrial will take place.

#### **4. Discipline of Children of Member Households:**

With children of member households, the elders will exercise disciplinary authority, if necessary, in the following ways.

- (a) If a baptized child growing up in a covenant home refuses, over a period of years, to profess faith in the Lord, the elders will increase pastoral help to the head of that household. If the grown child leaves the household without having made such a profession of faith, then the elders will solemnly warn the newly independent child of the spiritual hazards in breaking the covenant through rejecting a Biblical upbringing, and urge him to repent and believe. If the warning is not heeded, and the call to repent not answered properly, then the elders will solemnly declare the child to be a “covenant breaker” and will refuse the child’s name from the list of member households. His name will then be placed on a special priority list so the elders can pray and fast regularly for this endangered soul until he repents or dies.
  
- (b) If the child has professed faith in the Lord, has been baptized, and has been partaking of the Lord’s Supper, and subsequently demonstrates a rebellious spirit, or repudiates his earlier profession of faith, the elders will offer pastoral help to the head of the household as appropriate, and will instruct him to have his child refrain from taking the Lord’s Supper. If the child leaves the household in this state of rebellion, then the elders will remove the child’s name from the list of member households, will formally initiate the process of church discipline, and the child will be excommunicated. His name will then be placed on a special priority list so the elders can pray and fast regularly for this endangered soul until he repents or dies.

#### **5. Prerequisites for Formal Discipline:**

If informal discipline does not result in satisfactory correction, then those who are aware of the need for discipline are expected to call the matter to the attention of the elders. In the case of open and scandalous sin, there is no requirement to attempt private resolution of the matter and it should be brought to the elders without delay. Discipline will be imposed only after Scriptural prerequisites have been satisfied and the elders have made sufficient inquiry.

#### **6. Restoration:**

Excommunicative censure shall be ended when, by declaration of the elders, the one under discipline has been restored through repentance and/or conversion. The elders shall announce the end of the disciplinary action to the church.

## **Article VI: Subordinate Ministries**

The elders is session may delegate to an individual or board the executive authority of any subordinate ministry established by the elders. This executive responsibility continues at the pleasure of the elders. In order to dismiss such an individual, or remove someone from such a board, a majority vote of the elders is required. If the individual concerned is also an elder, he is excluded from voting on any matters concerning his own interest. If separation of a subordinate ministry from CREC becomes necessary, that action may be authorized by a majority vote of the elders.

All formal actions concerning subordinate ministries will be entered in the minutes of the elders' meetings.

## **Article VII: Incorporation**

- A. As a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, CREC is constituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, the only head of the church.
- B. CREC maintains its status as un-incorporated with Federal, State or Local governments as a matter of conscience, believing that we are assembled under the authority of Christ alone.
- D. CREC has constituted herself as a church. An assembly of the saints of Christ—in covenant with one another—and members of the Church invisible, under the authority and headship of the Lord Jesus Christ as properly overseen by the Church.

## **Article VIII: 501(c)(3) Information and Dissolution Clause**

This organization is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law) or (b) by an organization whose contributions are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.)

**Dissolution Clause:** Upon winding up and dissolution of this organization, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the organization, the remaining assets shall be distributed to a non-profit fund, foundation, or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.