

**the CONSTITUTION of
CHRIST CHURCH
SEARCY, ARKANSAS
(Last Revision December 2005)**

Preamble

We believe that, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church. We believe that the Church is Christ's body and bride. We believe that the Church will be victorious in bringing all nations to Christ as He puts all enemies under His feet. We believe in the communion of saints and in the holy catholic Church. Thus, we acknowledge that the church of God, purchased with Christ's blood, is manifested in diverse particular congregations in all the earth. We believe that it is the duty of each Christian in the holy catholic Church to be committed to and connected with a Biblically ordered particular congregation located in their geographical area.

Believing these things, the Christ Church is duly constituted with the following standards. These standards do no supplant Scripture, but rather are an expression of biblical church government under God. While biblical, these standards are primarily procedural; that all things might be done decently and in order. The purpose of this church is to through submission to His Word, proclaim grace in Christ to sinners, and to build up the saints through doctrinal and efficacious preaching of the whole counsel of God.

Article I. Members and Electors

A. Members

The procedures of membership outlined below are designed solely for the purpose of maintaining scriptural and accountable local church government (Heb. 13:17). 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 the church will be normally reckoned by household. A household will be eligible when the head of that household (ordinarily the husband and/or father) meets the following criteria as determined by two or more members of the Session who have personally spoken with the household or the individual(s) seeking membership:

- (a) Professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9-10)
- (b) Does not contradict that profession through his manner of life (Matt. 7:22-23)
- (c) Has been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19)
- (d) Submits himself to the government of this church (Philemon 2; Heb. 13:7,17)

2. As circumstances warrant, individuals from non-member households may join the church. Independent unmarried members are considered a household for purposes of voting. Otherwise, when such a person becomes a member, such an individual's capacity to be an elector will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Individuals may also come under our pastoral care without coming into formal membership or voting membership as denoted by an action of the Session.

3. Membership begins when covenant membership vows have been taken (Philemon 2; Heb. 13:7,17). The Session (of elders) oversees a membership list, which includes names, baptisms, and communicant status of each person in a member household

4. The Session of the church recognizes, through admitting the head of the household into such membership, that he is responsible before God for the spiritual condition of that household. Under the headship of Christ, the administration of church ordinances and discipline remains with the Session. However, in such administration, the Session is to respect the spiritual responsibility of the head of the household in submitting their children for baptism and communion.

C. Transfer of Membership

1. If a member household or individual member of Christ Church in good standing requests to be transferred to the care of another Christian church, the elders will counsel the members and normally grant the request, transferring them with a blessing.

2. If a member household or individual member of Christ Church requests to be released because of disciplinary proceedings against the individual or anyone in the household, the elders will deny the request until the disciplinary matter is resolved.

3. If a member household or individual member is moving from Christ Church's geographical area, before they leave the elders will exhort them on their duty to find a new church home as soon as possible. If they have not joined themselves to a new church within one year of moving, the elders will evaluate their situation and take appropriate biblical action.

D. Electors

Those members of Christ Church who vote in church elections and at heads of household meetings will be called electors. Electors are those communicant heads of households, regularly attending and not under discipline. Unmarried members who are independent of their parents may be considered as a household for purposes of voting.

Article II: Selection of Ministers, Elders and Deacons

A. Ministers

This church should be under the pastoral oversight of a minister, and when the church has no pastor it should seek to secure one without delay. All candidates must meet the qualifications for the office set down in Scripture (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:2-4). The candidate must also be in agreement with Christ Church's Statement of Faith and Constitution. When a vacancy occurs the Session shall serve as a pulpit committee. When a Candidate has been selected the Session shall order a heads of households 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 two weeks prior to the time of the meeting. A ballot will be issued and the electors of the church will have the option of voting either "yes" or "no." The question and vote will include the conditions of the minister's call. If the candidate receives the unanimous support of the church as represented (Philippians 2:1-4), the Session will install the minister. The requirement for unanimity may only be set aside through the unanimous consent of the Session, and that only after the Session has met with those who objected, and carefully considered their objections in the light of Scripture. The Session 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 Session. If the objections are overturned, then the Session will meet with those who objected to discuss the Session's decision. Once installed, the minister will serve for life, unless he resigns or is removed.

B. Elders

Elections will be held from time to time as circumstances warrant. A man may be considered as a potential elder in several ways. He may aspire to the office himself, the elders may approach him, or the people of the church may suggest his name to the elders. Once he becomes a candidate, the Session will examine the candidate with regard to his doctrine and manner of life. While recognizing the distinction between the office of minister and elder (1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:7-8) the elder candidate must meet the same qualifications as the minister (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:2-4). Candidates must be in agreement with Christ Church's Statement of Faith and Constitution. A man may not be placed on the ballot without the unanimous consent of the current Session. Once on the ballot, the electors of the church have the option of voting either "yes" or "no." If the candidate receives the unanimous support of the church as represented (Philippians 2:1-4), the Session will ordain the new elder to the ministry through the laying on of hands and prayer. The procedures regarding the requirement for unanimity will be the same as for the election of a minister. If a candidate for office is not elected, then an elder will meet with him within one week to discuss the election, and answer any questions the candidate might have. Once installed, the elder will serve for life, unless he resigns or is removed. The Session may choose, as their number grows, to enact

an elder rotation (three years on, one year off). The period of active service for an elder can be increased by one year or decreased by up to one year, and the period of inactive service extended one year by majority vote of the Session along with electoral majority vote, should any of these be in the best interest of the church.

C. Deacons

Elections will be held from time to time as circumstances warrant. A man may be considered as a potential deacon in several ways. He may aspire to the office himself, the elders or deacons may approach him, or the people of the church may suggest his name to the Session. The deacons will include the candidate in their work in order to prove his fitness for the office (1 Timothy 3:10). When the candidate has shown, in the unanimous judgment of the deacons, his fitness for office, the deacons will make a recommendation to the Session to place his name on the ballot. The Session will examine the candidate with regard to his doctrine and manner of life. If the candidate has any disagreement or mental reservation about any portion of the church's Statement of Faith or Constitution, then he must inform the Session of it. All candidates must meet the qualifications for the office set down in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:8-13). A man may not be placed on the ballot without the unanimous consent of the current Session. Once on the ballot, the electors have the option of voting either "yes" or "no." If in the unanimous judgment of the Session, the candidate receives the clear and obvious support of the church as represented, the Session will ordain the new deacon to the ministry through the laying on of hands and prayer (Acts 6:6). If a candidate for office is not elected, then an elder will meet with him within one week to discuss the election, and answer any questions the candidate might have. Once installed, the deacon will serve for life, unless he resigns, is removed, or is ordained as elder. A rotation will apply to deacons, as with the elders.

D. Elections

Electors may petition the Session at any time to call a heads of households meeting for the purpose of electing additional elders, or deacons, in accordance with Article VI.B.

Article III. Duties of Church Officers

A. Ministers and Elders

1. Responsibilities of elders in Session with the minister:

The elders in Session with the minister are collectively responsible to oversee the following:

- (a) Ruling/shepherding (1 Peter 5:1-2).
- (b) Equipping (Ephesians 4:11-12).
- (c) Prayer/fasting (Acts 6:4; 13:1-3).
- (d) Teaching/preaching (1 Timothy 5:17).
- (e) Administering church discipline and restoration (1 Corinthians 5:1-5).
- (f) Prayer for the healing of the sick (James 5:14-15).
- (g) Delegating responsibilities to the deacons, hiring and firing church staff, defining the

responsibilities of church staff, and delegating responsibilities to the staff of subordinate ministries. This includes the approval of the budget.

2. Ministers, in addition to the responsibilities enumerated in paragraph one above, are responsible for planning and leading worship (unless he delegates this to an elder or other man in the congregation), and administering the sacraments, (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

3. Conduct of Session meetings: All usual business of the Session will be conducted at their regular meetings, or at special meetings called for a particular purpose. The Session will appoint one of their number to clerk for the meetings. The moderator will normally be the minister, or senior minister when more than one minister exists in the church. The Session shall meet monthly, and the date, time, and place of the regular Session meeting shall be announced beforehand at the morning service, or listed in the church bulletin. Special meetings may be called by the pastor. Any elder may request a special meeting by a note to the pastor. A quorum shall be one-half of the elders serving in office, plus the moderator. Minutes of non-executive meetings shall be made available to the congregation.

4. Responsibilities of individual elders: Elders are responsible for those duties delegated to them by the Session, and recorded in the minutes, with due regard to their gifts and desires. Elders with such a charge will serve willingly, and without domineering in the discharge of their assigned duties (1 Peter 5:1-3). Under Christ, the highest authority in the local church is the Session. The elders principally function in the government of the church (there is no distinction of rank among the elders), and in teaching and instructing from the Word, and are called to support and care for the pastor in his ministry. 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 administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper. In all meetings of the Session, each has one vote. In their capacity as a Session, they oversee all the affairs of the church, including the labors of teachers and ministers.

5. Compensation: Those ministers or elders whose assigned duties preclude them from providing for their families in the ordinary way must be compensated by the church (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

6. Should an elder or deacon no longer attend Christ Church he should resign. He may be allowed a temporary sabbatical, should his absence be temporary, at the discretion of the other Session members. If he does not resign and is not attending services, nor on sabbatical, the Session shall automatically remove him from office after three (3) months of absence, or after absence at 5 regular Session meetings.

7. This constitution assumes and the norms of biblical church order require, that a plurality of elders oversee this local church. Therefore if there no longer exists a plurality of elders in office, and this cannot in a timely way be supplied, the remaining elder (or the electors of the church, if there are no elders), shall seek the temporary oversight of the elders of a trusted sister church with similar doctrinal standards and practices. The purpose of such an arrangement is to provide care and leadership. Should this arise because an Elder is inactive, he may be asked to become active. When a plurality of resident elders is raised up the oversight arrangement described shall immediately cease.

B. Deacons

1. Responsibilities of deacons: Under the general oversight of the Session, the deacons will manage the financial, physical, social, and benevolent functions of the church (Acts 6:2-4). Such responsibilities include: preparing and administering the annual budget, building maintenance, fellowship meals, administration of subordinate ministries, office support, and administering the deacons' 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 Session meetings, they will provide a quarterly financial report to the church, and they will give an annual report to the Session with proposals for the upcoming year.

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

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 Session. If the resignation is sought for reasons of moral or doctrinal turpitude, then the Session must exercise biblical discipline prior to, or in conjunction with, any consideration of the letter of resignation.

Article IV. Removal of Ministers, Elders and Deacons

A. Ministers and Elders

If one of the saints believes a minister or elder may be morally or doctrinally unfit for his office, the scriptural requirement for him is clear: he is to approach that person individually first (Mt. 18:15), and then with two or three others (Mt. 18:16). If the problem remains, then the individual, with the two or three witnesses, should come to the Session and present the charges (1 Tim. 5:19). If the charges are doctrinal or moral in nature, and if the remaining Session members 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 unanimously sustained by the remaining Session members, then that minister or elder, depending on the gravity of the charges and the response to the correction, will be rebuked in the presence of the congregation (1 Tim. 5:20), or will be removed from office (1 Tim. 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 Session and present the charges. If the charges are doctrinal or moral in nature, and if the Session unanimously decides 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 unanimously sustained by the Session, 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).

C. Removal for non-Doctrinal or non-Moral Reasons

An Elder may be removed from office by majority vote of the electors at a heads of households meeting called by the Session, and ratified by a majority vote of the other members of the Session. A heads of households meeting may also be called by petition of electors (Section VI. B). An elder may be removed should he not faithfully discharge his duties, no longer conform to the attributes of 1 Peter 5:2-3, or become mentally or physically unable to perform his duties, but not be guilty of chargeable sins or false doctrine.

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 Christ 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 Session or the church as a body. The Session of Christ Church will, through teaching and example, encourage the members of Christ Church to discipline one another through the following practices:

- (a) Exercising self-discipline; e.g. applying self-correction.
- (b) Overlooking, in love, the failings of one another (I Peter 4:8).
- (c) Admonishing a brother when necessary (Matthew 18:15).
- (d) Taking one or two other witnesses if the admonition is rejected (Matthew 18:16).
- (e) Bringing the issue to the church through the Session if the admonition is rejected (Matthew 18:17).

2. Formal discipline: Formal church discipline consists of excommunicative censure. One under discipline is to be considered and treated as any other unbeliever (Matthew 18:17; I Corinthians 5:1-13). Formal discipline is initiated by Scriptural procedures.

3. Subjects of discipline:

(a) All Members.

(b) Non-members: Professing Christians who attend Christ Church 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 comes to Christ Church, then the Session of Christ Church will decide whether to honor the discipline of the other church after due consultation with the person concerned and after appropriate information is obtained from the disciplining church.

4. 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 Session. 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 Session without delay. Discipline will be imposed only after Scriptural prerequisites have been satisfied and the Session has made sufficient inquiry.

5. Restoration: Excommunicative censure shall be ended when, in the opinion of the Session, the one under discipline has been restored through repentance. The Session shall announce the end of the disciplinary action to the church.

C. Complaints

A complaint is a written representation made for a serious grievance other than those that necessitate an accusation and judicial trial. Any member of the church in good standing shall have the right of complaint, provided that the individual attempts discussion and gives due notice to the party against whom the complaint is made. Complaints shall go to the Session, before being referred to any federation, alliance, or denominational entity.

Article VI. Heads of Households meetings

A. Annual Meetings

The Session shall call a heads of households meeting annually, to be held in November or December, for the purpose of reviewing the past year's progress, and the presentation of the next year's budget and ministries.

B. Special Heads of Households Meetings

Special heads of households meetings shall be called by the Session at any time, or whenever 25% of the electors presently attending shall request such a meeting. A meeting shall be held within 4 weeks of receipt of a valid petition requesting it and presented to the Session.

C. Other

No business shall be voted on at heads of households meetings except that which was stated in the call. No business shall be conducted unless a quorum is present. A quorum shall consist of at least 25% of the regularly attending electors (although members should attend weekly services with consistency, for the purpose of elector eligibility, less than 3 times in 2 months is not regular attendance.) A two (2) week notice for all meetings shall be given in the church bulletin and/or announced at the morning service(s).

D. The annual budget, pastors compensation, (including benefits) for the coming year, purchase or sale or real estate, major construction projects, and similar sales or purchases, and denomination, federation, or alliance affiliation or disaffiliation, shall be approved at a heads of households meeting. Two-thirds majority vote is required.

E. The pastor's compensation is part of his call and can only be changed by vote of the electors.

Article VII. Worship

A. The Covenantal Form of Worship

The Lord's Day worship service of Christ Church is understood to be a service of renewing the covenantal relationship between God and His people. Thus, we celebrate communion weekly and enjoin all baptized members of the covenant to participate. Thus, the order of our worship follows the Biblical pattern of Call, Confession, Communion, Consecration, and Commission.

B. The Schedule of Worship and Church Meetings

Worship services shall be held as often as the Session determines, but the regular schedule of meetings shall always include the Lord's Day service. Other ministries shall be scheduled according to the needs of the congregation at the discretion of the Session in accordance with God's Word, such as biblical and theological classes for further ministry training, special conferences and seminars, fellowship activities, and outreach ministries.

C. The Nature of Baptism

Baptism is a blessed sacrament of the New Testament instituted by our Lord as a sign and seal of salvation. The sacramental washing with water in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit officially admits a person into the visible church, testifies of their identification with the Triune God of Scripture, union with Christ, regeneration, forgiveness of sin, consecration to walk in newness of life, and fellowship in the Body of Christ (Mt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 2:11,12; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-5; Titus 3:5; Mk 1:4; Mt. 28:19,20).

D. Recipients of Baptism

Baptism, as has been nearly universally held in the Church, is appropriately administered to the children of Christians in infancy, since to them, no less than to adults are the promises of participation in the covenant, church, and kingdom of our Savior. And to them no less than to adults do the benefits of Christ and His redemption accomplished apply (Acts 2:39; Matt. 18:15-17; Eph. 6:4). That which is signified and conferred in baptism, therefore, is applicable to infants promised to be in covenant, as well as to adults who profess Christ.

Baptismal candidates, whether children or adults, must be approved by the Session. Adults should confess their allegiance to Christ prior to baptism. Minor children in the households of Christians should be baptized on the basis of one or more parent's covenantal duties and covenantal inclusion (Acts 16:31-34). The Session will, however, defer to the heads of "Baptistic" households and allow them to refrain from baptizing their infants.

E. Communion

Communion or the Eucharist is a blessed sacrament of the New Testament instituted by our Lord as a sign and seal of His redemptive work. By eating the bread and drinking the cup in a worthy manner believers spiritually feed upon Christ, renew their union and communion with Him, acknowledge His redemptive work on their behalf, and renew their thankfulness for His saving work, as well as spiritually commune with other believers (Luke 22:20; Mat. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 1 Cor. 10:14-21).

F. Recipients of Communion

The Eucharist is for all the Lord's people. Hence, we practice "open communion" as defined in the following way: We encourage all baptized Christians (not censured under church discipline) to celebrate the feast of the Eucharist and so commune with Christ in His body. Communion is integral to the act of confession, repentance, renewal, and abiding in Christ. Moreover, it is our conviction that communion should be received by all baptized covenant members who are able to physically eat and drink the elements, including young children being raised in the discipline and admonition of the Lord. Under the headship of Christ, the responsibility for administering the sacraments remains with the Session. The Session will, however, defer to the heads of differing households and allow them to delay their children's participation.

Article VIII. Incorporation

As a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ Church is not constituted or incorporated by anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the only head of the church. Christ Reformed Church maintains its status as an unincorporated church as a matter of conscience. As a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ Church accepts the various burdens and entanglements of civil regulation and taxation under protest. Christ Church has constituted herself, under the authority and headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, as an association of natural persons, and recognized as such by the laws of the State of Arkansas.

Article IX. Amendments

The Statement of Faith and Constitution may be amended at any time through unanimous consent of the Session, when the following conditions have been first fulfilled.

1. A written copy of the proposed change is distributed to the congregation at the morning service at least two (2) Sundays prior to the heads of households meeting.

2. There is a reading of the proposed change and consultation with the electors of the church at a heads of households meeting and it (the proposed change) is ratified by a two-thirds vote at said meeting.

We confess that this constitution is a fallible work of fallible men and, if obedience to Scripture requires it, may be set aside without the process of amendment by the unanimous judgment of the elders. Under such circumstances, the heads of households will be informed, and the constitution amended at the first opportunity.

Appendix Christ Church Constitution

Appendix 1: Statement of Faith

Our statement of faith is comprised of the following documents, all subordinate to the Scriptures, and of which we are in agreement: The Reformed Evangelical Confession which, together with the historic church, we confess the following:

The Apostles' Creed (AD 2nd century)

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

Nicene Creed Constantinople (AD 381)

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

Definition of Chalcedon (AD 451)

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanity; truly God and truly man, with a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father according to His deity, and consubstantial with us according to the humanity; like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before the ages He was begotten of the Father, according to the deity, and in these last days, for us and for our salvation, He was born of Mary the virgin, who is Godbearer according to His humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures; without confusing them, without interchanging them, without dividing them, and without separating them; the distinction of natures by no means taken away by the union, but the properties of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one subsistence; not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same only-begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as from the beginning the prophets have declared concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the symbol of the fathers has handed down to us.

A Westminster Creed (A modern selection from the 17th century Shorter Catechism)

I believe man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever; I believe God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth;

I believe there is but one true and living God; that there are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory;

I believe God has foreordained whatever comes to pass; that God made all things of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good; and that God preserves and governs all His creatures and all their actions.

I believe our first parents, though created in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, sinned against God, by eating the forbidden fruit; and that their fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery;

I believe God determined, out of His mere good pleasure, to deliver His elect out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer;

I believe the only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever;

I believe Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the office of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king.

I believe Christ as our Redeemer underwent the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, the cursed death of the cross,

and burial; He rose again from the dead on the third day, ascended up into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, the Father, and is coming to judge the world at the last day.

I believe we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit;

I believe God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance unto life to escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin;

I believe by His free grace we are effectually called, justified, and sanctified, and gathered into the visible church, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation;

I believe that we also are given in this life such accompanying benefits as assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end; that at death, we are made perfect in holiness, and immediately pass into glory; and our bodies, being still united in Christ, rest in their graves, till the resurrection; and at the resurrection, we shall be raised up in glory, we shall openly be acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

An Evangelical Statement (Adapted from the National Association of Evangelicals)

We believe the Bible to be the only inerrant Word of God. It is our only ultimate and infallible authority for faith and practice.

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is omnipotent, that is, He is all-powerful. He is omnipresent, that is, He is present throughout all Creation but not limited by it. He is omniscient, that is, nothing is hidden from His sight. In all things He is limited by nothing other than His own nature and character.

We believe the God we serve is holy, righteous, good, severe, loving and full of mercy. He created the heavens and earth, and everything in them, in the space of six ordinary days, and all very good. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of everything that has been made.

We believe in the true deity and full humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe in the full deity of the Holy Spirit, acknowledging Him together with the Father and the Son in the works of creation and redemption.

We believe that because of Adam's sin all mankind is in rebellion against God. For the salvation of such lost and sinful men, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary.

We believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, and that faith without works is dead.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and lost; those who are saved to the resurrection of life, and those who are lost to the resurrection of damnation. We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Appendix 2: Membership Vows

Our membership vows are:

“Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in need of salvation by Christ, and do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, receiving and resting upon Him alone as He is offered in the gospel?”

“Have you been baptized in accordance with His Word?” “Do you swear in the name of God, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live in a way that becomes followers of Christ?” “Do you swear in the name of God to support the ministry of this church in its worship and work, submitting to its government and discipline, while pursuing its purity and peace?”

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

“As a congregation of Christ, do you receive [this Christian/these Christians] into the covenant fellowship of Christ Church together with you, renewing your membership vows as you do so?”

Appendix 3: The Constitution of the Confederation of Reformed Evangelicals

[In accordance with Article III, Section N, of the constitution of the Confederation of Reformed Evangelicals (CRE), all member churches of the CRE are required to adopt the CRE constitution into their constitutional documents]

This constitution adopted at the XXXXXXXXXXXX, congregational meeting.