

CONSTITUTION

Name

The name of this congregation as incorporated and organized is Christ Community Church and will be further referenced in the remainder of this document as “Church”.

Mission

We exist to glorify God by partnering with Him in the redemption and discipleship of a people from every nation.

Beliefs

- We believe that the **Bible** is God’s perfect and complete Word to all people at all times. We believe it is divinely inspired, without error, and fully sufficient to equip God’s people for every good work. (Psalm 19.7-11, 2 Timothy 3.16-17, Hebrews 4.12, 2 Peter 1.20-21)
- We believe in **one God** who eternally exists as **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit** - three equal, unified, and yet distinct persons who are unchanging in character and nature. (Genesis 1.1, Genesis 1.26, Deuteronomy 6.4, Psalm 45.6-7, Psalm 110.1, Isaiah 46.9-10, Matthew 3.13-17, Matthew 28.17-20, John 17.3, 1 Corinthians 8.4-6, 1 Corinthians 12.4-6, 1 Timothy 2.5)
- We believe that God created **man and woman** uniquely in His image for the primary purpose of divine fellowship, yet through our sin we have each been separated from Him. (Genesis 1.27, Genesis 6.5, Psalm 51.5, Jeremiah 17.9, Romans 3.23, Romans 5.8, 6.23, Ephesians 2.1-3)
- We believe that in an act of ultimate love, God sent **His Son Jesus Christ** to be born of a virgin, live a sinless life, experience death and separation from the Father on the cross for the atonement of our sins, and then rise again proving His divine Sonship and giving us the hope of life after death as well. (Matthew 27.46, Luke 1.26-35, John 3.16, Romans 1.1-5, 1 Corinthians 15.3-4, 15.16-20, Philippians 2.5-8)
- We believe that only by **grace through faith in Christ alone** are our sins forgiven and our fellowship with God restored. (John 3.16, John 6.29, Romans 5.2, Ephesians 2.8-9, 2 Corinthians 5.18-21)
- We believe that at the moment of faith, the **Holy Spirit** enters into the life of the believer as a guide into truth, an advocate in prayer, the source of our spiritual gifts, and a deposit that guarantees our eternal life. (John 16.13, Romans 8.26-27, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 1.13-14)
- We believe that **baptism by immersion** is the primary public expression of our personal faith in Christ and one of the first steps of obedience in a believer’s new life in Him. (Matthews 28.18-20, Acts 2.41, 8.12, 8.34-38)
- We believe that God’s desire is for every believer to gather together in a **local church** for the purpose of growing in their relationship to Him, in their community and ministry to one another, and in their engagement in the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Acts 1.6-8, 2.41-47, 13.1-3, Romans 12.3-8, Ephesians 4.1-16, 1 Corinthians 12, Hebrews 10.25)

- We believe that God has called the church to celebrate two **sacraments**: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 26.26-29, Matthew 28.18-20, 1 Corinthians 11.17-34)
- We believe in the future resurrection of all mankind: a resurrection of **eternal life** and fellowship with God for those who believe in Christ and a resurrection of **eternal death** and separation from God for those who do not believe in Christ. (Matthew 25.31-46, John 5.28-29, Acts 24.15, 1 Thessalonians 1.9-10)
- We believe in the **future** return of Christ and the reconciliation of all things. (Romans 8.19-21, Colossians 1.19-20)

For further clarification, explanation, and description of our Christian beliefs, we encourage members to examine the following statements of faith: The Apostles Creed, The Nicene Creed, The Westminster Confession of Faith, and The Baptist Faith and Message (1963).

BYLAWS

Leadership

Christ

We believe that God has established Christ as the head over all things for His Body, the church. (Ephesians 4.15. 5.23) He is the unequalled leader of His people and the Great Shepherd and Guardian of His sheep (Hebrews 13.20, 1 Peter 2.25).

Elders

We believe that God, as an expression of His love and compassionate concern for His people, has entrusted the earthly pastoral care and leadership of His church to biblically qualified men who serve the Church as undershepherds (called pastors or elders) following in the example of Christ. (1 Peter 5.1-4)

- Qualifications - We believe that Scripture establishes the expectations and qualifications for pastors and elders in various passages including but not limited to 1 Timothy 3.1-7 and Titus 1.5-9. All elders are called to faithfully live a life consistent with these expectations and qualifications.
- Role and responsibilities - The elders of the church are called by God to “rule” over the affairs of the Church (1 Timothy 5.17) providing spiritual and organizational oversight for the congregation (1 Peter 5.1-4). They have been given a unique accountability for the Church (Hebrews 13.17) and thus are entrusted with a unique leadership authority in the life of the Church. Specifically, they are responsible to:
 - Define the overall ministry strategy and goals for the Church and ensure that all of the Church’s resources and efforts are consistently aligned with the stated Mission, Beliefs, Constitution, and Bylaws of the congregation.
 - Guard the theological integrity and doctrinal purity of the Church (Acts 20.26-32).
 - Oversee the financial affairs of the Church (Acts 4.35-37)
 - Provide oversight for all church-discipline related processes according to the biblical guidelines established in Matthew 18.15-17
 - To recommend all lead pastoral candidates to the Church
 - To affirm the calling of all other pastoral staff candidates according to the process specified in _____
 - To help cultivate a commitment to and an intentional strategy for prayer in the life of Church through their leadership and example (1 Thess. 5.17).
 - Fulfill other biblical duties of pastors and elders such as training current and future leaders (2 Timothy 2.2), equipping the members of the Church for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4.11-12), sending out missionaries (Acts 13.1-3), etc., as specified in Scripture.

- Act as the officers of the Church in all legal matters concerning the congregation.
- Pastoral Elders
 - The lead pastor and all pastoral staff will serve as ongoing members of the elder team.
- Lay Elders
 - In addition to the lead pastor and pastoral staff, lay elders will be affirmed and called according to the following process:
 - The elder team will identify, investigate, and recommend potential elder candidates whom they believe meet the qualifications of an elder.
 - The members of the congregation will be given a minimum of two weeks to express any concerns or questions of a elder candidate's qualifications following a model based on Matthew 18.15-17.
 - At the end of the minimum two week period, the elder team will call a member meeting at which time the congregation will vote to affirm the the candidate(s) according to the voting process specified in the membership section.
- Decision-making process
 - Quorum - A minimum of 75% of the elder team is required to be present (in person or by elder team-approved electronic means) to constitute a quorum and conduct any official business of the elder team.
 - Voting - A minimum of 75% vote of the quorum is required for approval of any motions.
- Term of Service
 - The active lead pastor and pastoral staff will serve as ongoing members of the elder team.
 - Lay elders will serve a maximum of three concurrent years. Upon conclusion of their three year term, lay elders will be required to take a one year leave of absence from active service before having the opportunity to be re-installed according to the specified lay elder selection process.
 - In the case of extraordinary circumstances such as a large number of lay elders scheduled to rotate off simultaneously, the elder team can vote to extend the service of an elder(s) for an additional term of one to no more than two years before the required one year leave of absence.
- Offices - The elder team will be co-chaired by the lead pastor and a lay elder selected by the elder team.
- Vacancies and Number of Elders - The elder team will be responsible to determine the appropriate number of elders necessary for the current spiritual and organizational needs of the congregation. When a vacancy is created through the resignation, dismissal, or rotation of a current elder or it is determined by the elder team that an additional elder is needed, the elder team will initiate the lay elder selection process in the lay elder section of this document.

- Accusations - No accusation against an elder will be received by the elder team without a minimum of two witnesses. (1 Timothy 5.19)
- Removal of an Elder - An elder can be removed by a vote of the elder team (excluding the elder in question for quorum and voting purposes).

Lead Pastor

Though all elders share equally in the responsibility to shepherd and oversee the congregation, some elders dedicate themselves so fully to the teaching and leadership of the Church that they will serve as paid pastors of the congregation (1 Corinthians 9.14, 1 Timothy 5.17-18). These roles will include but not necessarily be limited to the role of a lead pastor who will provide a unique voice of visionary leadership, spiritual direction, and missional focus for the congregation.

- Selection
 - The elder team will be responsible to identify, investigate, and recommend qualified candidate(s) for the role of lead pastor based on the elder expectations described in 1 Timothy 3.1-7 and Titus 1.5-9.
 - Upon the recommendation of the elder team, the congregation will vote to affirm and call the lead pastor based on the membership voting process established membership section of this document.
- Role and Responsibilities - The lead pastor will:
 - Serve as co-chair of the elder team.
 - Guide the development of the strategic vision and ministry plan of the congregation in alignment with the Mission, Constitution, and Bylaws of the Church.
 - Provide leadership for the pastoral staff and all ministry and administrative staff.
 - Lead the teaching ministry of the Church.
- Accountability and Discipline - The lead pastor is accountable to the elder team in all spiritual and organizational matters. The lead pastor will submit to the elder team in all matters of personal and spiritual discipline according to a process determined by the elders and in accordance with the principles of Matthew 18.15-17.
- Dismissal - If it is determined by a vote of the elder team (excluding the lead pastor in question) that it is necessary to remove the lead pastor, the elder team will make a formal recommendation to the Church after which the Church will vote according to the specified membership voting process.

Pastoral Staff

In addition to the role of lead pastor, the elders may determine it is necessary to hire additional pastoral staff to guide, direct, and implement the various ministries and missional efforts of the Church.

- Selection
 - The lead pastor will identify, investigate, and recommend pastoral staff candidates to the elder team for further investigation and affirmation.
 - The elder team will then vote for the approval of the pastoral staff candidates based on the specified elder voting process.
- Role and Responsibilities - The pastoral staff will fulfill specific responsibilities as determined by the lead pastor.
- Accountability and Discipline - Pastoral staff are accountable to the lead pastor in their staff functions and to the elder team in their role as elders. Pastoral staff will submit to the elder team in all matters of personal and spiritual discipline according to a process determined by the elders and in accordance with the principles of Matthew 18.15-17.
- Dismissal - Pastoral staff can be removed upon the recommendation of the lead pastor and based on the vote of the elder team (excluding the pastoral staff member in question)

Non-pastoral Staff

- Selection
 - If additional non-pastoral staff are needed as determined by the lead pastor in conjunction with the pastoral staff, the lead pastor and pastoral staff will identify, investigate, and hire personnel based on approved funding determined the elder team.
- Role and Responsibilities - All non-pastoral staff will serve the lead pastor and/or specific pastoral staff as assigned in the fulfillment of their roles.
- Accountability - Non-pastoral staff are accountable to the lead pastor in conjunction with any specific pastoral staff member under which they serve.

Membership

We believe that by grace through faith we are born again into the family of God (John 3.1-18, Ephesians 5.8-9, etc.) and through our subsequent baptism by immersion we enter into the fellowship of the local church (Acts 2.41). We believe the local church is the primary visible image of the invisible Body of Christ and is to be a compelling expression of His grace and truth to the world (John 1.14, 17). We believe that each member of the local church has been spiritually gifted and uniquely shaped by God to serve and build up the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12) until we all attain to the unity of the faith and full maturity in Christ (Ephesians 4.11-16).

Spiritual Qualifications - Members of the Church must:

- Give personal testimony to their faith in Christ and have been baptized by immersion after their salvation.
- Submit themselves to the spiritual authority of elders and the accountability of the congregation.
- Complete the current elder-approved membership process.

Voting - The members will vote on the following matters:

- Approval and dismissal of the lead pastor.
- Approval of the annual budget as proposed by the elder team.
- Approval of capital purchases or expenditures greater than 1/12th of current year's approved budget.
- Approval of lay elder candidate(s) as proposed by the elder team.
- Approval of all changes to Constitution or By-laws of the Church.
- Approval of other decisions as specified by the elder team.

Meetings

- The elder team will conduct, at minimum, one annual meeting of the members to approve the annual budget and make other decisions as specified by the elder team.
- Special meetings of the Church members can be called by the elder team for purposes such as the affirmation of a lead pastoral candidate, the affirmation of an elder candidate, etc.
- Notification of Meetings - A minimum of 2 weeks notice through various print, electronic, and other communication mediums will be given to the Church prior to all member meetings.
- Quorum - The members gathered at an appropriately called Church meeting will constitute the necessary quorum for decision-making purposes.
- Voting - a minimum of $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the quorum is needed for the passage of any motion.
- Absentee voting - Absentee voting is permitted upon written request by the member and subsequent approval of the elder team.
- Meeting Protocols - All member meetings will be facilitated by one of the co-chairs of the elder team or another elder selected by the elder team.

Accountability and Church Discipline

As followers of Christ and members of His church, God has called us to live in community with and in accountability to one another. While we strive to individually and collectively live lives that are "worthy of the calling" we have received (Ephesians 4.1, Philippians 1.27, Colossians 1.10), we recognize the biblical injunction to confront those caught in sin and restore them in spirit of love, compassion, forgiveness and patience (Ephesians 6.1). This is a responsibility that belongs to every believer (not

just church leaders). According the pattern described by Jesus in Matthew 18.15-17, the process of church discipline will include:

- A personal and private conversation between the member and the offending party.
- If the situation is not resolved, one or two additional members of the church (potentially including a church leader or elder) will be included in the process
- If the offending party continues to refuse counsel and correction, the matter will be subsequently brought before the full membership at an appropriately called member meeting at which time a vote can be proposed by the elders and affirmed by the membership to remove the offending party from the Church.
- If at a later date, the previously removed member displays a spirit of biblical remorse and actions consistent with genuine repentance, the Church will be encouraged to consider welcoming the member back into the fellowship of the congregation (2 Corinthians 2.6-8) through the current membership process.

Reasons for Removal

Church members can be removed from the congregation for the following reasons:

- Resignation of membership submitted in writing.
- Death.
- Transfer of membership to another congregation.
- The specified accountability and church discipline process.

Associations and Partnerships

We affirm the ecclesiastical independence and self-governing right of the Church to operate free from any outside influence or control. We also recognize the strategic need and opportunity to partner with various local and global organizations in the pursuit and fulfillment of our stated Mission. As those called by God to oversee the affairs of the Church, the elder team will be responsible to initiate, facilitate, and terminate all such partnerships and associations unless otherwise delegated.

Ordination Authority

The Church, upon the recommendation of the elder team, will have the authority to ordain, license, or commission individuals as ministers of the Gospel for the growth of the congregation and the advancement of the Kingdom to perform the sacraments and other

ceremonies of the Church including, but not limited to, baptism, the Lord's Supper, marriage, and funerals.

Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

We believe the Bible teaches that God created mankind as male and female, that marriage is a God-given institution designed to be a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman, and that our sexuality is a gift from God for the purpose of procreation and mutual pleasure within the marriage covenant (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:24; 1 Cor. 7; Eph. 5:22-33). Therefore:

- The lifestyles of all elders, staff, and church members are required to adhere to these beliefs in their own practice and/or abstinence of marriage and sexuality.
- The Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the Pastoral staff of the Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of the Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

Non- Profit Status

The Church is a non-profit corporation operating under the laws of the state of Connecticut and federal tax exemption status is granted under the Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3).

Indemnification and Limit of Liability

Upon compliance with any prerequisites required by the Connecticut Revised Nonstock Corporation Act (including, but not limited to, the standards of conduct listed in C.G.S. §33-1117), a pastor, elder, director, officer, employee or agent that becomes a party to a proceeding because the individual is or was a pastor, elder, director, officer, employee or agent shall be indemnified, to the extent allowed under the Act (C.G.S. §33-1116 to §33-1125, inclusive) for expenses incurred in connection with the proceeding, whether advanced before or after final disposition of a proceeding, and against liability incurred in the proceeding.

Limitation of Liability of Pastors and Elders

Consistent with Connecticut General Statutes and the Connecticut Revised Nonstock Corporation Act, a pastor, elder, director or officer discharging duties meeting the standards of the Statutes or the Act (C.G.S. 52-557m, C.G.S. §33-1104, C.G.S. §33-1111) shall not be held liable for actions taken as a pastor, elder, director or officer of the Church. Exceptions to the limitation will follow those as described in the Act(s).

Insurance

The Church may, but is not required to, purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of one or more pastors, elders, officers, employees, or agents against liability.

Dissolution

Upon the formal recommendation of the elder team, the Church can vote to officially dissolve the congregation based on the specified member voting process at which point in time the elders will oversee the sale of all assets of the Church and the distribution of those proceeds to other non-profit ministries or congregations aligned with the Mission of the Church and selected by the elder team.

Amendment Process

If amendments or alterations to the Constitution or By-laws are deemed necessary and beneficial by the elder team, they will present the recommended amendments or alterations to the Church at an appropriately called member meeting for a vote according to the specified member voting process.