

CHURCH CONSTITUTION

*Of Christ Church West Chester
West Chester, PA*

PREAMBLE

Since it pleased Almighty God, by his Holy Spirit, to call certain of his servants to unite here in 2007 as a Baptist church under the name The Journey, for the worship of God and the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and

Whereas we, the members of Christ Church West Chester, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of his Spirit, have recognized the need to reconstitute ourselves to more closely conform to his will for the Church in this age and to prepare ourselves for greater efforts in his name;

Now therefore we, the members of Christ Church West Chester, do hereby organize ourselves as a Baptist church in accord with the law and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1833, Revised) and Covenant (2018) of this church.

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of this church is Christ Church West Chester.

ARTICLE 2 - PURPOSE

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving him and obeying his commands through:

Worshipping him;

Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;

Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and
any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture;

Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work—local, domestic, and
international;

Administering the ordinances of Believer's baptism and holy communion;
Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers; and
Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs in the name of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized in obedience to Christ following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1833, Revised) and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 2 - Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be ordinarily, but not necessarily, recommended by the elders for admission and must be accepted by majority vote of the members present at any members' meeting, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3 - Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant (2018), each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Providential hindrance notwithstanding, each member is required to attend Sunday morning services and all members' meetings. Members will prioritize these times of corporate worship. Should individual circumstances preclude regular attendance, it is the duty of the member to notify the elders.

Section 4 - On Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church and/or rendering doubtful a profession of faith, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15-17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (Matthew 18: 15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14-15; 1 Timothy 5: 19-20 20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4-5).

The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; 1 Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4-5; Hebrews 12: 1-11; 24 Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5; 25 Matthew 7: 26-27; 18: 15-17; Luke 17: 3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5; 26 Galatians 6: 1-5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14-15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1:13-14; James 1: 22);

For the instruction in righteousness and the good of other Christians, as an example to them (Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24-25);

For the purity of the church as a whole (I Corinthians 5: 6-7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);

For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Proverbs 28: 7; Matthew 5: 13-16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1-14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10);
and

Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2: 24; 15: 5-6; II Corinthians 6: 14-7: 1; Ephesians 1: 4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).

Section 5 - Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death, and it shall also recognize the termination of a person's membership following his/her self-professed apostasy as confirmed by congregational vote. Additionally, the church may recognize the termination of a person's membership after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but

not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any members' meeting.

The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline.

Section 6 - Opportunities of Non-members

Non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

ARTICLE 4 - MEETINGS

Section 1 - Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Sunday, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2 - Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration, which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every other month, at some time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership.

An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church and shall conduct the meeting according to Roberts' Rules of Order, unless otherwise communicated to the congregation by the elders. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that relevant documents are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by the presence of twenty five percent of the membership. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present.

A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting for each fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level as funds allow. Summary reports shall be made available to the members at least quarterly. Budget revisions, when deemed necessary by the elders, are approved in like manner.

Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of ten percent of the membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

At any members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

ARTICLE 5 - OFFICERS & OTHER CHURCH POSITIONS

Section 1 - Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition, this constitution recognizes the possibility of other administrative positions to serve at the behest of the elders. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 2 - Elders

The elders shall be comprised of not less than three men (including the Senior Pastor) who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and I Peter 5:1-4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. Elders are a self-disciplining body. Individual elders may choose to take a leave from active service due to personal, family, or job-related situations that warrant such a leave. Reinstatement to active service is by mutual agreement between the individual and the elder board. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially. After an elder, other than the senior pastor or associate pastor(s), has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the office of elder after at least one year. If there is not a sufficient number of qualified men to satisfy the triennial cycle of affirmation and rest, the church may reaffirm those currently serving as elders for an additional three-year term.

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation in a specially called members' meeting. Any such

action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and I Timothy 5:17-21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the membership at any members' meeting of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental gospel convictions and do not teach our church anything contrary to the Statement of Faith. The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of senior and associate pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons, the deaconesses, and the membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a regular or specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following members' meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders. The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings.

Section 3 - The Senior Pastor

The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 3.

He shall preach on Sunday, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution.

The senior pastor shall have primary responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor, and in the absence of an associate pastor, the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

This is an elected position.

Section 4 – Associate Pastors

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate.

An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 4.

He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation.

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.

This is an elected position.

Section 5 – Assistant Pastors

The church may call additional pastors, from within the congregation only, whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of assistant.

An assistant pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 5.

He shall assist the senior pastor and associate pastor(s) in the performance of their regular duties, and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor. The elders shall define the responsibilities of the assistant pastor(s).

This is an elected position.

Section 6 – Pastoral Assistants

The senior pastor, with the approval of the elder board, may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as pastoral assistants. These shall not necessarily be elders, though they may be recognized as elders should they be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation, in accordance with Article 5, Section 2. Should the congregation recognize a

pastoral assistant as an elder, he will assume the title and responsibilities of assistant pastor as described in Article 5, Section 5.

The senior pastor shall define the responsibilities of the pastoral assistant(s). They shall serve at the will of the senior pastor for an initial term up to four years, though that term may be extended with the approval of the elders. Compensation may include housing, mileage reimbursement, educational expenses, salary, or other living expenses at the approval of the elders and when funds are available in the approved budget.

This is not an elected position.

Section 7 - Interns

The senior pastor, with the approval of the elder board, may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as interns.

The senior pastor shall assign the responsibilities of the intern(s). They shall serve at the will of the senior pastor for a term of two years, though that term may be extended with the approval of the elders. Compensation may include housing, mileage reimbursement, educational expenses, salary, or other living expenses at the approval of the elders and when funds are available in the approved budget.

This is not an elected position.

Section 8 - Deacons & Deaconesses

The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8-13. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses.

Deacons and deaconesses may choose to take a leave from active service due to personal, family, or job-related situations that warrant such a leave. Reinstatement to active service in the diaconate is by mutual agreement between the individual and the elder board.

They shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of three years and may only be elected to another term after one year.

Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those gifted in service and administration.

The elders, with assistance from the deacons and deaconesses, shall receive, hold, and disburse a budgeted fund for benevolence. Deacons and deaconesses shall report on the use of

budgeted funds for benevolence to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

This is an elected position.

Section 9 - Clerk

It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the elders or the church.

The clerk shall be a member selected by the elders to serve a term of three years.

In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.

The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

This is not an elected position.

Section 10 - Treasurer

The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall assist in the presentation of regular reports on the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. This responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of three years.

This is an elected position.

Section 11 - Other Staff

The senior pastor and/or elder board may hire additional paid or unpaid staff to assist with pastoral ministry as needs arise.

ARTICLE 6 - ELECTIONS

Section 1 - Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;

Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;

All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;

The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2 - Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, deaconesses, or treasurer shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a two-thirds majority of all votes cast for the office of elder at a regularly-scheduled or specially called members' meeting. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

Section 3 - Calling of the Senior Pastor

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential senior pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1833, Revised) and Church Covenant (2018). Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as senior pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Section 4 - Calling of Associate Pastor

In the calling of any man to the position of associate pastor, the same basic process of calling an elder (as described in Article 6, Section 2) must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching and/or teaching gifts of any potential associate pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1833, Revised) and Church Covenant (2018). Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Section 5 - Calling of Assistant Pastor

The calling of any man to the position of assistant pastor requires that the man has been recognized and called by the congregation to the office of elder, according to the process described in Article 6, Section 2. Such a man may then be called by the elders to serve as assistant pastor with defined duties for a fixed period of time specified by the elders in the terms of his call.

ARTICLE 7 - PERMISSIVE INDEMNIFICATION

At the discretion of the elders (no less than a three-fourths majority), the church may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

ARTICLE 8 - DEVIATIONS OF PRACTICE

If a church member believes the church to be out of accord with this constitution, he or she should inform an elder. When the elders determine that the church is out of accord with this

constitution, they must provide an update at each members' meeting until the situation is remedied.

ARTICLE 9 - AMENDMENTS

The New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1833, Revised) and Church Covenant (2018) may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the church clerk by the next members' meeting.

ARTICLE 10 - DISSOLUTION

In the event that the elders of the church determine that there is reasonable cause to dissolve Christ Church West Chester as a corporate entity, the elders shall recommend dissolution to the membership. The elders shall call a special members' meeting as set out in Article 4, Section 2. Notice of the meeting shall be sent in writing to the membership and posted at all entrances to the church building no less than sixty days prior to the meeting. The notice shall state that the purpose of the meeting is to consider dissolution of the corporation and how the assets of the corporation will be distributed after all creditors have been paid. At least two-thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in the affirmative to approve the proposal of dissolution.

After approval of dissolution by the members, all of the corporation's debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated, as approved by a simple majority of the members present at a members' meeting, to one or more religious organizations which meet the qualifications described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Faith. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of exclusively for such exempt purposes by a court of competent jurisdiction where the principal office of the corporation is then located.