



Reforming Truth Church

Constitution

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The Constitution of Reforming Truth Church

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Preamble

Since it pleased Almighty God by his Holy Spirit to call a certain number of us to assemble to worship him and encourage one another in Lexington, Kentucky, we the elders and members of Reforming Truth Church, for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and so that this body may be governed in a scriptural and orderly manner, do declare and establish this constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and articulated in the standards set forth in the Confession of Faith and Covenant of this church.

As members of Reforming Truth Church we voluntarily and cheerfully submit ourselves to the following thirteen (13) articles of this constitution.

It is hereby resolved that upon the church's acceptance of this constitution, all previous constitutions, rules and regulations, or by-laws, will be declared void and invalid. This constitution will serve as the only articles of government of this church.

Article I: Name

The name of this church shall be Reforming Truth Church (hereafter referred to as RTC).

Article II: Purpose

This church exists by the grace of God and for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its functions. We will seek to glorify the God (Eph. 3:21) of Scripture by loving him and obeying his commands through:

- worshipping Him; (John 4:23, 24; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 1 Pet. 2:5)
- edifying and equipping the saints; (1 Cor. 12:27, 28; 14:12, 18, 19, 26; Eph. 4:11-16)
- proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching, personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture, both locally and worldwide; (Mat. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; Acts 13 & 14)

- administering the ordinances of baptism and communion;
- seeking whenever possible to both plant and strengthen other churches, promoting biblical faithfulness and purity in all the assemblies of Christ; (Acts 15:36, 41; Acts 16:5; Jude 3)
- and seeking to minister relief to the needy, especially among the saints. (Rom. 15:26, 27; Gal. 2:10; Gal. 6:10)

Article III: Confession of Faith

The Holy Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and infallible word of God and is the supreme authority in all matters of belief and practice and is therefore the basis for any Confession of Faith. As such, we believe it is both prudent and useful to adhere to certain biblical statements and confessions in order that the doctrinal beliefs of this church may be clearly known. RTC adopts as a reliable summary of scriptural teaching the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith (hereafter referred to as LBCF). We consider this ancient document to be an excellent expression of that which we believe is clearly taught in the Word of God and embraced by us as faithful statements of our beliefs. We find it to be a confirmation of faith, a means of edification, an aid in controversy, and a basis for church unity.

As a more concise expression of our faith, we also adopt the Reforming Catholic Confession. This statement is consistent with the LBCF and is the minimum confession of faith one must affirm to be a member of RTC.

Article IV: Covenant

Having, as we trust, been brought by God's grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him, and having been baptized as believers in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious help, solemnly and joyfully confirm our covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We commit to live under the authority of the Bible as individual Christians and together as a church.

We commit ourselves to the Lord's mission for His Church, which is to go and make disciples of all the nations and, specifically, to labor side-by-side in this

mission as a local church. (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 12:1-31; Phil 1:27-28; 1 Pet. 5:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17)

We commit to work together to promote a faithful biblical ministry in this church by sustaining its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines, and to support and strengthen other like-minded churches. (Acts 20:27; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; 14:12, 26; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim 2:8; 3:14-15; 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2)

We agree to uphold this Covenant, our Constitution, and Confession of Faith. (Acts 2:42; Phil. 1:27-2:2; Eph. 4:1-6)

We agree to give sacrificially, cheerfully, and primarily to the work of this church and the needy among us. (Matt. 6:19-21, 2 Cor. 9:6-8, Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; Heb. 13:5)

We commit to carry out our responsibilities as a congregation, which includes following the lead and example of the elders, gathering regularly for Lord's Day worship and other opportunities to meet together, participating in members' meetings, and building up the body through service. (1 Cor. 14:3-4, 12, 26; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 5:17, Heb. 10:24-25; 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-3)

We commit ourselves to love one another as we are taught in God's Word as a mark of true faith and promote and encourage unity and peace in the church. (John 13:34-35; 15:17; John 17:20-23; Rom. 13:8; Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:14; Phil. 2:1-11; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 2:7-11; 3:10- 24; 4:7-13, 15-21)

We will rejoice with one another and bear each other's burdens and sorrow with tenderness and sympathy. We will watch over each other and help one another grow in holiness and faithfulness. (Matt. 18:15-17; Rom. 12:15, 15:14; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; Gal. 6:1-2; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:15; 1 Tim. 5:1-2)

We will pray for the ministry, mission, and members of this church regularly. (Acts 2:42; 12:5; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 1:4; Col. 4:2 Jas. 5:16)

We will pray for the salvation of our family and friends, model godly living before them, and proclaim the gospel of Jesus to them as God gives us opportunity, and strive to bring up our children in the nurture and discipline of the Lord. (Deut. 6:4-9; Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 4:2-4)

We will seek, by God's grace, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and pursue Christlikeness as those who have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life. (Matt. 5:13-16; Rom. 6:4; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:9-12; 1 John 2:15-17)

Should we depart from this congregation, we will seek membership in another gospel-preaching church.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Article V: Government

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord of His Church and its only Head. He governs His Church by the Word of God. His government is exercised in particular churches through the leadership of elders who have been appointed and set apart by the church to teach the Word of God and to lead the flock.

The government of RTC shall be elder rule with authority invested in the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders, as under-shepherds to the Great Shepherd of the sheep, are to govern according to his Word, by his Spirit and to his glory and for the edification of his people.

Deacons are appointed to care for the administrative and practical affairs of the church.

If RTC, through the providence of God comes to have no elders, then the deacons shall assume leadership in order to seek out the association of churches of which RTC is a member, if any, or a confessionally like-minded church with an established plurality of elders. Once this relationship is established, the association or selected church shall assist RTC in the selection of elder(s) for RTC. This relationship between the churches should be maintained until such time as elder(s) are again appointed.

RTC is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches, and will seek, insofar as is practical and

scriptural to maintain cooperation with other churches of Jesus Christ. When it is thought desirable to have fellowship, consultation, and cooperation with other local churches of like faith and order, RTC may join in an association of churches. Upon recommendation of the Board of Elders, such affiliations may be entered into by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, except in the case detailed below. Withdrawal from associations may be effected by the same procedure. Delegates to such associations shall be chosen by the Board of Elders.

Within the first year after initially adopting this constitution, RTC may join in an association of churches upon the unanimous consent of the Board of Elders.

Article VI: Church Officers

The officers of RTC shall consist of elders and deacons. The appointment of elders and deacons is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. However, He has ordained that they be formally recognized by the consent of the particular church they serve. Elders and deacons are ordained to office by the laying on of hands by the eldership. This is an expression of approval for which the elders are responsible. Therefore, each officer must have the approval, not only of the church as a whole, but of the eldership in particular. The Lord's appointment of an individual to either of these offices is recognized by means of that individual's possession of those graces and gifts required by Scripture for the particular office, and his own conviction that the Lord is calling him to minister in that office. The recognition of officers is a matter of such importance that it should never proceed without much prayerful waiting upon God, careful consideration of the relevant passages of Scripture and thorough evaluation of those persons being considered. Each member of the church has a responsibility to be intelligently informed regarding these matters.

Procedure of Appointment

The members of the church are encouraged to express to the elders (privately) their views concerning those whom Christ may be gifting for office in the church. The elders will seriously consider the wisdom God gives to His

church. However, since it is the elder's responsibility to lead the church, nominations to office are to be made by the eldership.

The Board of Elders must first approach the potential candidate for office and give him sufficient time to make a prayerful and thoughtful decision. Upon gaining his assent for the responsibility, the candidate will begin a candidacy process to be determined by the Board of Elders. Upon successful completion of this candidacy process, the Board of Elders shall then present his nomination to the congregation for their evaluation at least three weeks prior to the formal vote of confirmation or denial. This interlude gives the congregation adequate time for giving feedback to the Board of Elders and the candidate. At the appointed time of the congregational meeting, the candidate will be confirmed by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. Confirmation or denial of officers of the church shall be by secret ballot.

Article VII: Elders

Elders (also called pastors or overseers) are entrusted by God with the responsibility of shepherding and overseeing the flock and, thus, constitute the governing body of the Church. All affairs of RTC shall be exercised by or under their leadership.

Qualifications

Anyone desiring the office of an elder must be a member of this Church and evidence to God's people the personal, domestic, and ministerial qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Only such men qualify who can and will conscientiously affirm and uphold the LBCF, and the Constitution, and Covenant of RTC.

Ordination

All men confirmed as elders at RTC will be given a duly completed certificate of ordination as a minister of the church.

Authority

Because the authority of the elders of the church is human authority exercised in the house of God, it has both high prerogatives and important limitations;

1. It is divinely-delegated authority. Thus, elders are answerable to God for the exercise of this authority. (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17). They are, therefore, obligated to discharge all the duties specified in the Scriptures in such passages as Acts 20:17-35, 1 Peter 5:1-4 and Hebrews 13:17.
2. When elders exercise this authority by requiring obedience to their leadership, they must seek to gain the consciences of God's people through the ministry of the Word. (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:1-2; Heb. 13:17).
3. The authority of the elders does not include the right to make all decisions unilaterally. The Bible makes clear that decisions having to do with corrective discipline and the recognition of officers require the consent of the local church. (Acts 6:2-6; 9:26; 1 Cor. 5:4-5, 13; 2 Cor 2:6) It is only fitting that other important matters such as the reception and exclusion of church members, the full support and involuntary removal of officers and major financial decisions be approved by the consent of the church. Nevertheless, the elders must provide definitive leadership to the church in the making of such decisions.
4. The authority of the elders is limited to the sphere of the local church. They may not require consequences for sin beyond those of church discipline, invade the spheres of other ordained human authorities (husbands, fathers, civil rulers and employers), or command God's people regarding matters not specified in Scripture. (Matt. 22:21; Luke 12:13-14) They must, however, order the house of God by the application of his Word. (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:3a; Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-6:9; 1 Cor. 7:25-28; 35-40)
5. The authority of elders is conditioned by the fact that they are themselves members of the local church. While elders are shepherds over the flock, they are also members of the flock. Therefore, each individual elder is entitled to the same privileges, is obligated by the same responsibilities and is subject to the same discipline as are all other members of the church. Thus, each individual elder is both under

- the oversight of his fellow elders and accountable to the church as a whole. (Matt. 18:17; 23:9; 26:31; 2 Cor. 1 1:19-20; Gal. 2:11; 3 John 1,9- 10).
6. Finally, the authority of the elders is a very real authority. When it is Biblically exercised, God's people are required to submit to this authority. (Heb. 13:17)

Parity and Diversity of Elders

All elders may be diverse in their spiritual gifts, but all have equal voice and authority. (Acts 20:28; Gal. 2:11; 1 Pet. 5:1-2; 1 Tim. 5:17) Some elders will be more experienced, more involved, and more proficient than others in executing various dimensions of the pastoral office. Some may, for example, be more engaged in public preaching and teaching than others.

The Senior Pastor

RTC recognizes that there is a "first among equals" within the elder board, traditionally referred to as the senior pastor, in a way that does not violate the understanding of parity. He has served in the pastorate the longest, preaches the majority of the time, carries the majority of ministry responsibility, and is expected to be salaried full-time, if possible and if he should accept. The Senior Pastor will serve as the chairman of the Board of Elders.

The Administrative Pastor

RTC recognizes the benefit of having an elder operate as a close assistant to the Senior Pastor, traditionally referred to as the Administrative Pastor, who can allow the Senior Pastor to focus as much as possible on the study of the Scriptures and preaching by taking responsibility for the bulk of the administrative responsibility of the ministry. This role, if occupied, is expected to a salaried full-time, if possible and if he should accept.

Term of Office

Elders appointed to the office serve in such office until resignation or removal.

Number of Elders

Elders may be added, according to the confirmation procedure, as the Board of Elders sees fit in order to carry on the ministry to RTC. However, every effort shall be made to maintain a minimum of three men serving on the Board of Elders as long as there are available men both qualified and willing to serve.

Compensation

While the New Testament clearly indicates that there may be elders who are not financially supported by the church, the elders who rule well, and especially those who labor in the Word and doctrine, will, when possible, be maintained in material necessities and disentangled from the cares of another vocation according to their gifts, the needs and capability of the church and the direction of Christ, her Head.

Removal

An elder may step down from his office due to providential circumstances or be removed due to the discipline of the church.

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. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21.

Organization and Operational Procedures

The Elders shall meet regularly or whenever called by a member of the Elders. The Elders will seek, at all times, to work together in unanimous agreement concerning the direction and work of the church. When required, decisions of the Elders shall be by majority vote, except where elsewhere specified in this constitution.

In those instances where the elders are at an impasse and cannot produce an united decision on issues that may seriously affect the life of the church, they must seek either to bring the impasse to the body for a two-thirds majority vote or submit to the decision of at least three trusted pastors of the

association of which RTC is a member, if applicable, or of confessionally like-minded churches, who will hear the matter together and bring a united decision (see chapter 26, paragraph 15 of the LCBF).

Duties

The duties of the board of elders include:

1. Oversee the affairs of the Church.
2. Pray and intercede for the members of the body.
3. Practice the public ministry the Word, which is primarily by means of preaching and formal and informal teaching (depending on the elder's gifts, he may be involved in one more than the other).
4. Practice the private ministry of the Word, which calls for all Elders to take the Word of God in hand and come along side members of the body to help them conform more to the image of Christ.
5. Appoint such meetings as they believe good for the spiritual health of the church and assure that they are conducted to the glory of God and according to the provisions of His Word.
6. Promote the mutual accountability that is the responsibility of all members of the local church.
7. Appoint other Elders. Appoint paid pastoral staff when necessary and define any qualifications in addition to those listed above that they believe will enable the employed elders to satisfy a specific functional role for which they will be responsible.
8. Appoint and remove all non-pastoral paid staff of the Church, define their duties, and fix the terms of their service and compensation.
9. Establish policies and practices consistent for the Church.
10. Secure and dispose of any loans on behalf of the Church.
11. Decide the annual budget.
12. Provide pulpit supply in the absence of the Senior Pastor and take full charge of all services not conducted by him.
13. Administer the ordinances of Baptism and Communion.
14. Settle disputes between members of the Church, between members and leadership.
15. Model self-sufficiency, especially in financial matters, where the elder shall have the right to decide whether or not he will accept all, part, or

none of church compensation and, with the last two options, be bi-vocational.

Article VIII: Deacons

Deacons are primarily responsible for assisting the elders in those practical aspects of ministry which would otherwise distract them from their priorities of the ministry of the Word, prayer and shepherding. Such practical matters include the administration of benevolence, the maintenance and improvement of the church's facilities, the management of various business affairs and the facilitation of ministries within the church.

Deacons must fulfill the duties of their office in cooperation with, and in subjection to, the elders. The elders may at their discretion appoint one of the deacons to act as the chairman of the deacons in order to facilitate communication with the elders and the general organization of the diaconate.

Qualifications

Deacons shall be members of this Church who are men or women that meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Meetings

The Board of Deacons shall inform the Board of Elders of all their meetings so a representative from the elders may be present, if so desired by the elders.

Term of Office

No term of office shall be fixed for deacons.

Removal

A deacon may step down from his office due to providential circumstances or be removed due to the discipline of the church.

Any two members with reason to believe that an deacon should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1

Timothy 5:17-21. If the Board of Elders determines that a deacon fails to meet the necessary Scriptural qualifications for his office, he may be removed by majority vote of the Board of Elders.

Article IX: Corporate Officers

The officers required by the Commonwealth of Kentucky to constitute a legal incorporation are three: 1) the President; 2) the Secretary; and 3) the Treasurer. The corporate officers of RTC shall be church officers.

The President

The Senior Pastor, as the Chairman of the Board of Elders, will also serve as the President or if the role of Senior Pastor is vacant, the Board of Elders will appoint one from among themselves to occupy the office of President. He represents the Church in corporate matters, ensures that the corporate obligations are met, and is authorized to sign documents on behalf of the Church.

The Secretary

The Administrative Pastor, if the role is filled, will also serve as the Secretary or if the role of Administrative Pastor is vacant, the Board of Elders will appoint one from among themselves to occupy the office of Secretary. He is responsible for the corporate record keeping activities of the Church and to assume the functions of the President in the absence of the President.

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the board of Elders

The Treasurer

The Board of Elders will appoint one from either among themselves or the Board of Deacons to occupy the office of Treasurer. The Treasurer shall serve under the authority of the Board of Elders.

The duties of the Treasurer include:

1. Maintains all financial records of the Church and provides regular reports on the status of the Church finances, including receipt and disbursement of funds. Reports are provided annually or upon request to the Board of Elders.
2. Disburses all Church funds in accordance with budgeted guidelines and of any special fund, and moneys under the direction of the Elders.
3. Has authority to sign checks for Church funds. Checks written for \$5,000.00 or more require an initial of a second corporate officer.
4. Expends funds for non-budgeted items up to \$250.00 without the approval of the Elders.

Article X: Membership

A genuine Christian's commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ is inseparable from his commitment to His truth and His people. This commitment ordinarily requires a formal, open, voluntary, solemn and enduring commitment to membership in a local church.

Warrant for Membership

Following are some proofs of the existence of the local church which Christ ordained for His own glory and worship, and also for the spiritual benefit of His people, which shows the warrant for every true Christian to seek membership therein:

1. The New Testament presents the local church as a distinct and defined group of individuals covenanted together to worship God and carry out the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ. The local church is made up of individuals who may be counted, (Acts 2:41,42; Acts 4:4) added to, (Acts 2:47; 5:14) and even subtracted from (Mat 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:12,13; 2 Cor. 2:6).
2. Each local church of Christ is called upon to select leaders and representatives from among itself, (Acts 6:1-6; Acts 15:22; 2 Cor. 8:19,23) thus making it a formal organization with recognized officers. (Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23)
3. Fulfillment of the great commission requires church membership. (Matt 28:18-20) In this commission there is an inseparable connection between making disciples, baptizing them, and then teaching them all things that Christ has commanded. It is clear from the Scriptures that the Apostles

implemented this commission by gathering baptized disciples into local churches where they were taught all the things that Christ had commanded. (Acts 2:38-42; 1 Cor. 4:1-7; Titus 1:5-9, Heb. 13:17)

4. The whole of the New Testament presents a picture of disciples of Christ worshipping and serving Him in connection with some local church. We believe this is what Christ intends for His disciples to the end of the age.

Qualifications

The following are the requirements which a person must meet in order to become a member of RTC:

1. Profession of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as their only hope for forgiveness of sins and salvation with God.
2. Credible affirmation of such a profession given to the elder(s) of RTC.
3. Full subscription to the Reforming Catholic Confession and either a full subscription or a subscription of unity to the LBCF.
4. A completed reading of the LBCF (which is the confession of faith for all elders and teachers of RTC).
5. A completed reading of and a willingness to submit to the Constitution and Covenant of RTC.
6. Follow the Ordinance of Baptism (or stated intention to undergo such at the first possible opportunity).

Full subscription to a confession requires the person to subscribe to the entire confession because it is biblical, while allowing the subscriber to take exception to words or phrases, but not to any doctrines.

Subscription of unity allows the member to be unsure of their agreement with the entirety of the confession, but requires that member agree not to publicly contradict the confession and to be teachable and open to being persuaded to what is contained in the confession. The member willingly submits to being taught what the confession teaches, with the goal growing toward full subscription of the confession over time.

Individuals may meet the qualifications for membership at various ages. In order to protect members from being required to handle matters above their maturity level, Individuals admitted to membership who are under the age of

18 will be admitted as non-voting members. These members will gain voting privileges when they turn 18. Non-voting members are welcome to attend members' meetings, but may be asked to step outside at the elders' discretion should a sensitive matter of church discipline need to be brought before the membership.

Application for Membership

Individuals who qualify for membership shall make their desire known to either an Elder or a Deacon, who will register them for a membership course. Applicants shall attend the membership course after having read all required materials for instruction in church doctrine, policy, and polity. Following the course, applicants shall fill out an application, give personal affirmation of their salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and confirm their understanding and agreement with the Constitution and Covenant of the Church in a personal interview with two elders. The Board of Elders will present prospective members to the current membership for feedback. Upon recommendation by the interviewing elders, review of any feedback, and acceptance by the Board of Elders, applicants who are admitted to membership shall come before the membership in a regular worship service designated by the Elders to make a covenant to serve the Lord together with it and receive the right hand of fellowship.

Privileges and Responsibilities

In accordance with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each Member is 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.

Members shall be expected, so far as reasonably possible, to participate actively in the life of the Church by:

- Regularly attending its Lord's Day worship gatherings;
- Faithfully observing its ordinances, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper;
- Cheerfully submitting to the eldership and to the church's discipline and instruction;

- Upholding our Covenant, Constitution, and Confession of Faith
- Regularly attending its Members' Meetings; and
- Regularly voting on the confirmation of Elders and Deacons, and on decisions regarding Membership, and on all other matters submitted to the Members' vote. (Not applicable to non-voting members)

A person who is not a Member may not lead or teach in any ministry or hold any office in the Church.

Termination

As is the case with receiving members, so the termination of church membership must be governed by biblical principles. Accordingly, membership in RTC will be terminated in one of the following three ways:

1. **Death:** Physical death obviously warrants the removal of membership from the church roll.
2. **Transfer of membership:** Since the New Testament norm for all Christians is that they be members of true local churches, any person leaving the membership of this church should intentionally seek to transfer membership to another true church without delay. We realize that this process may sometimes require a transitional period, and the elders will take such things into account when dealing with a transfer of membership. It will be the duty of the elders to handle transfer of membership in a way that accords with scriptural principles.
3. **Exclusion:**
 - a. **Exclusion, not under discipline:** In some cases, a person's membership may need to be terminated for reasons which, in the judgment of the church, may not warrant discipline. Such cases may include the resignation of a member who concludes that they are not a Christian; the resignation of a member who can no longer agree to the Confession of faith in good conscience; requests to be relieved from their covenant obligations for reasons that the church or its elders may deem satisfactory; the relocation of a member who no longer remains in contact with the church; etc. Upon the recommendation of the elders, the church shall exclude such persons from its membership roll without the exercise of church discipline.

- b. **Exclusion by excommunication:** According to Holy Scripture, a church must exclude from its membership any person who persists in holding or teaching serious doctrinal heresies, or who persists in conduct which is either publicly scandalous, or blatantly inconsistent with his or her Christian profession, or who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of the church.

Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or unrepentantly guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, 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 (see Matthew 18:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19– 20; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5).

The purpose of such discipline should be:

- For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4–5; Hebrews 12:1–11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26–27; 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1–5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13– 14; James 1:22);
- For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24– 25);
- For the purity of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 5:6–7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2);

- For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10); and
- Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 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; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12).

Since full restoration is the goal of all church discipline, all members of the church should unite in its exercise when necessary, praying earnestly for God's gracious, restorative blessing upon those who have been disciplined. It is also both the duty and privilege of the church to forgive and to restore to full membership a disciplined or excommunicated member upon satisfactory evidence of repentance. Thus any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by a majority vote of this church upon evidence of their repentance and reformation.

Voting

The following matters shall be presented to the Members at a regular or special Members' Meeting for a vote, and shall be deemed approved upon obtaining the requisite majority indicated below of the Members present and voting at the Members' Meeting in question:

- Confirmation of Elders. A two-thirds majority vote is required.
- Removal of Elders. A three-fourths majority vote is required.
- Confirmation of Deacons. A two-thirds majority vote is required.
- Termination of Membership. A simple majority is required. Any person who has their Membership terminated is automatically removed from any church office.
- Church discipline. A simple majority is required.
- Amendments to the Constitution or Church Membership Covenant. A three-fourths majority vote is required.
- Dissolution of the Church. A three-fourths majority vote is required.
- Any other decision brought before a regular or special Members' Meeting for a vote. A simple majority vote is required unless otherwise provided in the Constitution.

Article XI: Meetings

The worship service is the only service of the church that is scripturally mandated and shall be conducted on the first day (Sunday) of every week. Other public services, including Sunday School, shall be conducted at such times as decided by the Elders.

Business meetings shall be held in order to conduct the business of the Church in a timely manner. Any elder may call special meetings of the church. The agenda of business meetings will be determined by the board of Elders. The board of Elders will appoint one from among themselves as moderator of the each business meeting to ensure the the meeting proceeds according to the agenda.

Notices of all business or special meetings shall be given either by announcement at the regular services of the Church two (2) Sundays preceding the meeting or by written notice to members at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.

Quorums

Twenty Five percent (25%) of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

Unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws, a majority of Elders currently serving shall constitute a quorum except when a vacancy or vacancies prevents such majority, whereupon a majority of the elders in office shall constitute a quorum, provided such majority shall constitute either one-third of the authorized number of Elders or at least two Elders, whichever is larger, or unless the authorized number of Elders is only one.

Article XII: Property

All property of this church is to be held for the use and benefit of those who are members thereof. This property is set apart to be used for the worship of God, the edification of His people, and any other use which is deemed necessary for the propagation of the gospel of Christ by this church and its leadership. We believe that each and every local church of Christ is autonomous under the headship of Jesus Christ, and shall choose for itself

what shall be done with its own property. We agree together to seek Divine wisdom in the usage of this property for the glory of God, the good of His church, and the promotion of His truth, according to the Holy Scriptures.

In the case of dissolution of the church organization, the elders shall cause the assets herein to be distributed to another church within the association of which RTC is a member, if any or another church with purposes similar to that identified in ARTICLE II of the Church Constitution.

Article XIII: Amendments

This constitution may be amended by unanimous consent of the Board of Elders and a three-fourths 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 Secretary of the Church.