

The Constitution of The Christian Church of Rural Grove



Last Revised: July 28, 2024
20 Pages

Index

Church Covenant.....	1
Preamble.....	2
Name.....	2
Purpose.....	2
Associations.....	2
Statement of Belief.....	3
The Holy Scriptures.....	3
Dispensationalism.....	3
The Godhead.....	3
The Lord Jesus Christ.....	3
The Holy Spirit.....	4
Creation.....	4
Total Depravity.....	4
Salvation.....	5
The Church.....	5
Baptism and Communion.....	5
Coming Events.....	6
The Righteous and The Wicked.....	6
The Rapture of the Church.....	6
The Judgment Seat Of Christ.....	6
The Millennial Kingdom.....	6
The Eternal State.....	6
Israel.....	6
Angels.....	7
Satan.....	7
Personal Separation.....	7
Ecclesiastical Separation.....	7
Priesthood of Believers.....	8
Civil Government.....	8
Rules of Order.....	9
Membership.....	9
Duties of a Member.....	9
Officers.....	11
General Qualifications.....	11
Candidates for Pastor.....	11
Call of Pastor.....	11
Responsibilities.....	12
Compensation of Pastor.....	12
Vacation.....	12
Absence.....	12
Termination of the Pastor.....	12
The Board of Deacons.....	13
Board of Trustees.....	13
Treasurer.....	14
Financial Secretary.....	14
Clerk.....	15
Sunday School Superintendent.....	15
Missions Committee.....	15
Auditing Committee.....	15
Nominating Committee.....	16
Pulpit committee.....	16
Dismissal of Officers.....	16
Business Meetings.....	16
Financial Regulations.....	17
Meetings of the Church.....	18
Ordination.....	18
Tax Exempt Provisions.....	18
Amendments.....	19
Policy Statement on Sexuality.....	19

Church Covenant

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, and on our profession of that faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and accepting the Word of God as our rule for faith and practice, we do now in the presence of God, the angels and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We pledge, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, in holiness and comfort in time of distress; to promote it's prosperity and spirituality; to sustain it's worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence in all aspects of our lives; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church and the spreading of the gospel through all nations.

We also pledge to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the things of Christ; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings; faithful in our responsibilities and exemplary in our deportment and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ; remembering that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and that as Christ is our Lord we should refrain from using our bodies in any way that might grieve the Holy Spirit.

We further pledge to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness, distress and material need; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover pledge that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

To these and all other Christian duties we do humbly and cheerfully submit ourselves, promising to perform them not in our own strength, being aware of our weakness, but in the strength of the Lord, whose we are, and whom we serve; to whom be the glory in the church through all ages, world without end. Amen.

The Christian Church of Rural Grove

The Preamble

Resting our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and believing the teachings of the Holy Bible as inerrant, inspired Word of the living God both verbally and in every part, we have affiliated ourselves with one another as a body of immersed believers, and we do adopt this Constitution as a declaration of our convictions so that we may carry on the Lord's work decently and in order. We enter in to a fellowship which asks all of it's members to engage in the ministry of maintaining it's unique and significant testimony against the apostasy, worldliness, and indifference and to seek by every means possible to assist it in it's positive preaching of the Bible as the Word of God and in seeking to win the lost for Christ.

Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be The Christian Church of Rural Grove. The church is located in the Town of Root, New York.

Article II - Purpose

Our purpose is to glorify God by conducting a church in accordance with the Word of God, the Statement of Belief, the Covenant, and the Constitution of this local church, promoting worship of our God, edifying believers, teaching the whole counsel of God, administering the ordinances and Biblical discipline, seeking to win the lost to Christ through personal witnessing and the preaching of the Gospel, carrying on a vigorous missionary program around the world, establishing other churches, defending the faith and maintaining a good testimony for Christ in our community by godliness and good works.

Article III - Associations

This church shall be an independent, autonomous church, subject only to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. It has the right to cooperate and associate with other Biblical groups on a voluntary basis. There shall be no cooperation with any group that permits the presence of apostates or apostasy, or that endorses groups that permit the presence of apostates or apostasy.

This church shall fellowship with associations as long as these groups are characterized by Biblical convictions and vigorous opposition to apostasy and compromise. If these groups forsake their present Biblical position, this church shall take appropriate action to withdraw from their fellowship.

Article IV- Statement of Belief

1. The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed, and therefore the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. The King James Bible shall be the preferred version used in the pulpit, classroom and memorization. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)

2. Dispensationalism

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations - the law, the church, and the kingdom- are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture. (Gen. 1:28; I Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25, 27; Rev. 20:2-6)

3. The Godhead

We believe in The One True God; who is an intelligent, sovereign, spiritual and personal Being; perfect, infinite, and eternal in His being, holiness and love, wisdom and power; absolutely separate from and above the world as it's Creator, yet everywhere present in the world as the Upholder of all things. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. (Gen. 1:1; Ex. 15:11; Ps. 83:18; 139:7-9; Mk. 12:29; Mat. 28:19; John 5:19-23; 10:30; 14:26; 15:26; 2 Cor. 1:18-22; 13:14; 1 John 5:7)

4. The Lord Jesus Christ

We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ: He is the second person of the Triune God, the eternal Word and Only Begotten Son; that without any change to His divine person, He became a man by the miracle of the Virgin Birth, thus to continue forever as both true God and true Man, one Person with two natures; that as Man He was tempted as we are, yet without sin; that as the perfect Lamb of God He gave Himself in death upon the cross, bearing the sin of the world, and suffering it's full penalty of divine wrath in our stead; that He arose from the grave in a glorified body; that as our great High Priest He ascended into Heaven, there to appear before the face of God as our Advocate and Intercessor. (John 1:1,14; 3:16; Mat. 1:18-25; Gal. 4:4, 5; Phil. 2:6-10; I Cor. 15:3-7; Heb. 4:14-16; I John 2:1,2)

5. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person possessing all the attributes of personality and of deity (1 Corinthians 2:10-13; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Hebrews 9:14; Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 40:13-14; Romans 15:13; John 16:13). He is equal with the Father and the Son and is of the same nature (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17).

We believe that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; John 14:16-17; 15:26). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-14; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22). He is the agent of the new birth (Titus 3:5), baptizing all believers into the church which is Christ's body (1 Corinthians 12:13).

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher, who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible (John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:19-21). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18).

We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to each believer, individually, as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 3:18). We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-11) for the perfecting of the saints today (Ephesians 4:7-12; 1 Corinthians 14:12). We teach that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles' ministry (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

6. Creation

We believe the Genesis account of creation as being neither allegory nor myth, but a literal historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of the Trinity without any evolutionary process. (Gen. 1 & 2; Ps. 33:9; John 1:3; Col. 1:16,17; Heb. 1:2)

7. Total Depravity

We believe all men are by nature and choice sinful and lost; that man was the direct creation of God, made in His image and likeness; that by personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, man became a sinful creature, the father of a fallen race which is universally sinful in both nature and practice, thus alienated from the life and family of God, under the righteous judgment and wrath of God, and has within himself no possible means of salvation. (Gen. 1:27; 3:6; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:23; 5:12,19; Gal. 3:11)

8. Salvation

We believe in salvation by grace through faith: that salvation is the free gift of God, neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any virtue or work of man, but received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all true believers have as a present possession the gift of eternal life, a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God, deliverance and security from all condemnation, every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness, and the divine guarantee that they shall never perish; that this salvation affects the whole man; that apart from Christ there is no possible salvation. (Eph. 2:8,9; Titus 3:5; John 1:12; 3:14; 10:28,29; Rom. 8:1; Phil. 1:6)

9. The Church

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Church of Jesus Christ began at Pentecost and will be completed at the Rapture. It must be considered in two aspects: the local church and the "church which is His body".

The local church is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by a covenant in the faith and the fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word. Its Scriptural officers are Pastors, sometimes called Bishops or Elders, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the epistles to Timothy and Titus.

This definition of the local church leads to these Scriptural distinctives:

- a) Sole authority of the Scriptures for faith and practice;
- b) Autonomy of the local church
- c) Believers' baptism by immersion before church membership;
- d) Two officers, Pastor (Elder, Bishop) and Deacon;
- e) Two symbolic ordinances, baptism and the Lord's table;
- f) Individual priesthood of the believer and soul liberty;
- g) Separation of church and state

The "church which is His body" is the entire company of the believers in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, regardless of denominational affiliation and present position in heaven or on earth. (Mat. 28:19,20; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4,41,42; 10:44,45; 11:15,16; I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22,23; Titus 1; Heb. 12:23)

10. Baptism and Communion

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem his identification with the crucified, buried, risen Savior, thus illustrating the believer's death to sin and his resurrection to a new life. It is a prerequisite to membership and privileges in a local church.

We believe that communion (also known as The Lord's Supper) is for believers to commemorate Christ's death until He comes and should be preceded by solemn self-examination and confession of known sin. The Christian Church of Rural Grove never has, and never will, refuse communion to anyone. This is a personal matter between the individual and God. Neither the Pastor, nor the Deacons should ever note who does, and who does not take communion.

The ordinances of baptism and communion must be observed under the authority of the local church. (Acts 8:36-39; Rom. 6:3-5; I Cor. 11:23-28)

11. Coming Events

a) The Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting.

b) The Rapture of the Church

We believe in the "Blessed Hope", the personal imminent pretribulational and premillennial appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ to rapture His redeemed ones of the church. (I Cor. 15:51,52; I Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 2:1,2; Titus 2:13; I John 3:2)

c) The Judgment Seat of Christ

We believe that every saved person of the Church Age will appear before the "Judgment Seat" to be judged by the Lord in regard to his service and receive rewards according to his works. (Mat. 6:2; Rom. 14:10; I Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10)

d) The Millennial Kingdom

We believe that Christ will return to earth after the tribulation with His saints to establish the Millennial Kingdom which literally will be on the earth and will be ruled by Christ from the throne of David. (Is. 9:6,7; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29,30; 2 Thess. 1:6-12; Rev. 20:1-6, 12-14)

e) The Eternal State

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire. The souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and new body are reunited to be forever glorified with the Lord. The souls of the unbelievers after death remain in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with the spirit, soul and body reunited they shall appear before the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment. (Mat. 25:46; Luke 16:19 -26; John 5:28,29; 2 Cor. 5:8,10; Phil. 1:23)

12. Israel

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after completion of the Church, she will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ. (Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 11:1-32; Ezek. 37)

13. Angels

We believe in the personal existence of angels who were created by God to bring honor and glory to His name and to serve Him. Those angels who kept their first estate minister for them who are the heirs of salvation. There were among the hosts those who fell with Satan, the angels who kept not their first estate, who are presently functioning in Satan's counterfeit system as rulers of darkness, to be resisted by the believers through the armor provided by God. (Is. 6; Mat. 17:18; Eph. 6:11,12; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 12:9)

14. Satan

We believe in the existence of Satan: who originally was created a holy and perfect being, but through pride and wicked ambition rebelled against God, thus becoming utterly depraved in character, the great adversary of God and His people, leader of all other evil angels and wicked spirits, the deceiver and god of this present world: that his powers are vast, but strictly limited by the permissive will of God who overrules all his wicked devices for good; that he was defeated and judged at the cross, and therefore his final doom is certain; that we are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God, by the blood of the Lamb and through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Is. 14:12-15; Eph 6:12; I Pet. 5:8; I John 3:8; Rev. 12:9-11; 20:10)

15. Personal Separation

We believe the Scriptures teach that every believer should be separated unto God from the world, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit, should walk in Christian love and holiness, exhibiting qualities of honesty, integrity, forgiveness, and loving-kindness. We further believe that any achievement in these characteristics will be evidenced by sincere humility and genuine zeal for the advancement of the cause of Christ. We also believe the Scriptures admonish every believer not to love the world or the things in the world, but rather flee evil desires, avoid every kind of evil and refrain from questionable practices which destroy one's testimony, offend one's brother and fail to glorify God. (Prov. 14:19-21; I Cor. 6:18-20; 8:9-13; 10:23,33; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:22-25; Eph. 4:32; 5:1,2,7-10, 15-20; Phil. 4:8; I Thes. 4:7; I Pet. 5:5,6)

16. Ecclesiastical Separation

We believe the Scriptures teach that the believer should be separated from apostasy as exemplified in ecclesiastical organizations which include radicals, liberals and those who sanction theological compromise. This doctrine is based upon God's eternal principle of division between truth and error and His specific command to be separated from the unbelievers and disobedient brethren. This truth is to be practiced with an attitude of devotion to God, humility, compassion, and yet with conviction, to create the proper condition and atmosphere for the main objective, i.e. the salvation of the lost through the Gospel of God. We believe ecumenical evangelism which involves apostates violates the principles taught in God's Word. (Mat. 10:34-42; 18:15; Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5:7-13; 2 Cor. 6:14; 11:4; Gal. 1:8,9; I Tim. 6:3-6; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; Titus 3:10,11; 2 John 9-11)

17. Priesthood of Believers

We believe in the priesthood of all believers: that Christ is our Great High Priest and through Him every born-again person has direct access into God's presence without the need of a human priest; that the believer has the right and responsibility to personally study and interpret the Scriptures guided by the Holy Spirit. (John 14:6; Heb. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:15; I Pet. 2:1,5,9)

18. Civil Government

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home; 2) the church; and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respectable Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; I Pet. 2:13-14)

Article V- Rules of Order

Section 1- Membership

Any potential new member is to have a meeting with the Pastor and the Deacons. The Pastor and Deacons will then decide whether or not to recommend said individual to the church membership. After a recommendation is made to the church membership, upon a majority vote of the active church members present at any church business meeting, membership shall be extended to all who have had and whose lives evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior; who renounce sin; who endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord; who fully subscribe to the statement of faith contained herein; and who enter in to the church covenant contained herein; and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:

A) By baptism (immersion) as a true believer in Christ Jesus as personal Savior;

B) By a letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized by immersion to a profession of faith;

C) By testimony of faith, having been baptized by immersion; or

D) By restoration, if having been removed from the membership, upon majority vote of the congregation after confession is made publicly before church membership of the sin or sins involved, and satisfactorily evidencing repentance to the Pastor (or the Board of Deacons if the office of Pastor is vacant).

Section 2- Duties of a Member

On becoming a member of this church, in addition to the church covenant and regular attendance, each one further covenants to love, honor and esteem the Pastor; to pray for him; and to recognize his authority in spiritual affairs of the church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; to support the church in prayer, tithes, offerings and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and in accordance with Biblical commands to support, through a lifestyle walk, affirmation of the beliefs and practices of the church.

In the event that any voting member remains absent from all church services for a period of three (3) months, it is the responsibility of the Pastor and/or Deacon board to contact the individual. This contact should include a caring discussion concerning the member's lack of attendance and also encouragement to begin fellowship once again. The result of this contact will then be considered by the Pastor and Deacons. If the member continues to be absent from all church services for another three (3) months, he/she will be removed from membership at the discretion of the Pastor and Deacons.

A voting member who realizes that he/she will not be able to attend any church services for at least three months due to what is deemed a legitimate reason such as missionary service, being away to attend college, or being a seasonal resident, should inform the Pastor and/or Deacons concerning their plans. During their time away, they will become a non-voting member until they return and make request to the Pastor and/or Deacons to be reinstated as a voting member. At such time the Pastor and Deacons will make a decision regarding their membership. If that member does not return to attendance, he/she will be informed according to the previous paragraph.

An individual who becomes a member while under the age of 18 will start as a non-voting member. Upon reaching eighteen (18) years of age, he/she will automatically become a voting member.

It is the responsibility of the Pastor and Deacons to maintain a current membership list. When changes are made, a copy shall be provided to the Church Clerk and the active church membership shall be informed of the changes.

Termination of membership may transpire in one of the following ways:

1. By death in which case no church action is required.
2. By request when a member not under church discipline submits a written request, and upon majority vote of the active members present and voting, will be dropped from the membership.
3. By letter of transfer when any member except a member under church discipline, upon written request from a church of like faith and practice, and upon majority vote of active members present and voting, will be dropped from the membership and granted a letter of full fellowship sent to the receiving church by the Pastor and/or Deacons.
4. By discipline when the Pastor and Deacons having taken action against any member of the church whose words or action become an offense to the church by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct and violate the Statement of Belief, Rules of Order, or Church Covenant. The Pastor and Deacons first seek to secure restoration, and if unsuccessful to recommend to the church his or her prompt dismissal from the church by majority vote. In cases involving a problem of morals or issues which would seriously disturb the peace of the church, the recommendations of the Pastor and Deacons will be approved by a vote of the church. Failing to approve the recommendation, the church must hear the case for themselves, preferably without detail. Any member may appeal his or her case to the church and be heard in his own defense if the church agrees by three-fourths majority vote to hear the case. (Mat. 18:15-17; I Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Gal. 6:1; Titus 3:10)

Section 3- Officers

1) General Qualifications

Any officer of this church or member of any committee of this church shall meet all Scriptural qualifications and principles incumbent upon their office. They shall agree to the Confession of Faith, Covenant and Constitution of this church. Unless otherwise stated, the minimum age for officers shall be twenty-one (21), and they shall have been a member for at least one year. (This last requirement concerning length of membership may be waived by this church if it deems it necessary to do so. However, caution is urged: I Tim. 3:6; 5:22. Length of membership shall not apply to the election of a Pastor). All officers, board and committees shall be under the general supervision of the Pastor and the Deacons. All planned activities shall be presented to and approved by the Pastor and Board of Deacons before they are started. Only active male members of this church may hold the office of Pastor, Deacon or Trustee. All other positions are open to any active member.

2) Candidates for Pastor

As often as it may become necessary to call a Pastor, the Pulpit Committee will without unnecessary delay investigate and invite to the church a minister of good report who accepts the doctrinal stand and practices of the church. The Pulpit Committee will recommend him to the church membership. If he has served in other churches, his ministry there should be explored. If after hearing him the Pulpit Committee desires to consider him a candidate for the pastorate, he will be invited to come and preach. His candidacy is to be announced to the church prior to his coming.

The candidate, before he is called, will be required to state his acceptance of and adherence to the Statement of Belief, Rules of Order and Covenant of this church to the Pulpit Committee. Any differences which he holds concerning these documents should be submitted to the committee in writing. He must also state in writing any differences which he holds relating to groups and associations with which this church is in fellowship.

3) Call of Pastor

The candidate for the pastorate will be extended a call by the church membership at a special meeting of the church called for that purpose. Notice of this meeting will be given two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting.

The Pastor will be called for an indeterminate term. He will be chosen by a three-fourths majority vote of the qualified active church members present and voting. To avoid confusion, only one candidate for the pastorate will be considered at one time.

4) Responsibilities

The Pastor, with accountability to the Board of Deacons and in compliance with the church's Constitution and Bylaws and the policies and procedures of the congregation, will be considered the chief administrator of the church and is to have spiritual oversight with a servant's attitude toward this church which practices congregational government. He is to preach the Gospel, feed the flock and equip the membership for the work of this ministry; he is to have in his charge the stated services of public worship; he will administer the ordinances; and he is to perform the usual duties of a minister.

The Pastor will moderate business meetings of the church and Board of Deacons or in his absence he may appoint a member of the Board of Deacons to moderate. When the Pastor is unavailable to appoint a moderator, the Chairman of the Board of Deacons will moderate or appoint a moderator from the Board of Deacons.

The Pastor will be a member of all committees of the church with the right of choice to attend all meetings. He is to have access to all books or records except personal giving records.

The Pastor, in cooperation with the Deacons, will secure speakers and programs for the church.

5) Compensation of Pastor

The Pastor's compensation will be reviewed by the Trustees annually and a recommendation submitted as a part of the church budget prior to the Annual Church Business Meeting.

6) Vacation

The Pastor is to have an annual vacation; the time and extent to be agreed upon by the Pastor, Deacons, and Trustees.

7) Absence

Absence from the services of the church will be by mutual consent of the Pastor and Deacons. The Pastor will be expected to attend, when expedient, at the church's expense, the conferences and fellowships with which the church is affiliated.

8) Termination of the Pastor

The Pastor will give the church not less than thirty days nor more than sixty days notice of his intention to discontinue as Pastor. The church will give the Pastor not less than thirty days notice of dismissal. Dismissal of the Pastor will be by vote of the church at a special meeting called for that purpose which will have been read from the pulpit on two successive Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting. A majority vote of qualified active church members present and voting will be required for dismissal.

A list of charges, reasons, or grounds for such dismissal will be given to the Pastor by the Board of Deacons in private. A meeting of the active church membership will then be held to discuss said charges, reasons, or grounds for such dismissal, according to Matthew chapter 18.

If it is not deemed wise by the church for the Pastor to continue his duties, he may be released immediately with one month of pay, except in the case of immorality when he would be dismissed immediately without pay.

Upon termination, the Pastor and his family will automatically be terminated from the membership roles.

9) The Board of Deacons

- A. The Board of Deacons shall assist the Pastor, in such a manner as he shall request, in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the religious services, and in performing all other work of the church.
- B. The Board of Deacons shall make provision for the observance of the ordinances of the church.
- C. The Board of Deacons shall with the Pastor, consider application for church membership.
- D. The Board of Deacons shall, in cooperation with the Pastor, distribute the benevolence fund.
- E. The Board of Deacons shall assist the Pastor in visitation and all other evangelistic efforts of the church.
- F. The Board of Deacons shall provide for the pulpit supply and act as leaders for church meetings if the office of Pastor is vacant.
- G. The Board of Deacons shall assist the Pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries as requested by the Pastor.
- H. The Board of Deacons shall meet the qualifications of I Timothy 3.
- I. The Board of Deacons shall elect each year a Deacon to be Chairman who shall preside over their meetings and have general oversight of their work.
- J. If, at any time, there should only be one (1) Deacon, he shall be considered the Chairman.
- K. The Pastor, Chairman, or majority of the Deacons may call a Deacons meeting.
- L. The term of office is for three (3) years.
- M. The possibility shall exist for the establishment of a single one-year term for the orientation of future deacon leadership in the church. This man must meet the qualifications of deacon and will have the same rights and duties as the other deacons with the exception of voting responsibilities. He must be nominated and voted upon to assume such a position.

10) Board of Trustees

- A. The Board of Trustees shall elect a member of that Board each year to preside over their meetings and to have general oversight of their work. They shall also each year elect a secretary to record the minutes of their meetings. The Pastor, Chairman of the Deacon's (in the Pastor's absence), the Chairman of the Trustees, or a majority of the Trustees, may call a Trustees meeting.

- B. The Board of Trustees shall hold and maintain the property of this church and supervise the care of the same. They shall supervise any improvements that are not entrusted to a special committee. They shall seek to promote the welfare of this church in the matters of finance. The members of this church shall not look upon the Trustees as the 'work detail' of the church, but they shall assist them in their work.
- C. The month before the Annual Business Meeting, the Trustees shall submit to the membership a suggested budget of current expenses for the next fiscal year, which shall then be subject to the membership's amendment and approval. Then shall set up and recommend the annual budget to the church. They shall be responsible for the supervision of all church properties and the consideration of all expenditures made under the budget. They shall not sell, mortgage or otherwise encumber the real estate or other property of the church unless with the consent of a majority of the active members present at a regularly called business meeting. The Board of Trustees shall be the trustees of the corporation.
- D. The Board of Trustees shall have oversight for the Office of the Treasurer.
- E. The Trustees shall appoint one active member to be a member of the Nominating Committee, and when necessary, the Pulpit Committee.
- F. The Board of Trustees shall consist of three (3) or a multiple of three (such as 6, 9, or 12) active members, which number of Trustees will be determined by the voting active membership, one-third of the Board to retire or be re-elected at each annual meeting. The term of office is for three years.
- G. In case of vacancy, it shall be the responsibility of the Pastor and the remaining Trustees to recommend to the membership a qualified active member to fill the unexpired term.

11) Treasurer

The Treasurer should have a working knowledge of financial matters. The Treasurer shall be responsible to the Board of Trustees for his or her actions. The Treasurer shall keep an account of all financial records, and he or she shall present a written report of the current financial condition of this church at the Annual and all Quarterly Business meetings. The Treasurer shall pay all bills when due, and he or she shall disperse designated gifts under the provisions of Article VII (B). The Treasurer, upon retirement or removal from office, shall deliver to his or her successor or to the Chairman of the Trustees, all monies and financial records complete to his or her day of surrender. The Treasurer shall be elected for a one (1) year term.

12) Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall take charge of all monies received by the church and its subsidiary organizations except the Deacon's Fund; and he or she with some member of the Board of Trustees shall count them each week, and make at least a weekly deposit of the same, or appoint a reliable person to do so. In his or her absence, the Chairman or Secretary of the Trustees shall do the preceding and make a record for the Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary shall make a written report of the total receipts

according to their various funds at the Annual Business Meeting of the church. Upon his or her retirement or removal from office, he or she shall deliver to his or her successor or the Chairman of the Trustees all records and monies of the church in his or her possession. The Financial Secretary shall be elected for a one (1) year term.

13) Clerk (Also known as the Corporation Clerk, and/or the Secretary of the Corporation)

It shall be the duty of the Clerk to keep full and correct minutes of all business meetings of the church, to keep a correct list of members, and to attend to such correspondence as properly belongs to his or her office. The Clerk shall take attendance of all members present at every business meeting. The term of office is one (1) year.

14) Sunday School Superintendent

He or she shall be the head of the Sunday School, taking charge of all its departments, and shall be responsible for all of its activities. All teachers, officers, and other necessary personnel of the Sunday School shall be appointed by the Superintendent, Pastor and the Board of Deacons. He or she shall have the authority to call teacher meetings. He or she shall submit all curricula to the Pastor and Deacons, for their approval prior to their use. He or she shall make a written report to the church at the Annual Business Meeting. The term of office is one (1) year.

15) Missions Committee

It shall be the duty of the Missions Committee to foster and promote missionary interest in the church and the Sunday School. They shall have the general supervision over the missionary activities of the church and its subsidiary organizations. The committee shall prepare a missionary budget to be submitted with the budget submitted by the Trustees for approval at the October business meeting. All expenditures for missions will be in conformity with the adopted budget and any changes subject to membership approval. They shall select as chairman, a voting member (age 18 or older), who will submit a written report at the meeting in October, and any reports requested by the Pastor and Deacons. The Missions Committee shall be made up of the Pastor and/or one Deacon, and two or more other voting members. There is also allowance for younger CCRG members (ages 16-17) to be non-voting participants of the committee to enable them greater exposure to missions and the church to benefit from their perspective. The total number of youths must be less than half of the committee. All are to be nominated and approved by the membership at the special meeting for officer elections held in August. The term of office is one (1) year.

16) Auditing Committee

An Auditing Committee of two (2) or three (3) active members shall be elected by the church at the Annual Business Meeting to serve for the ensuing year. They shall carefully examine the records, receipts, vouchers, etc. of the church following the close of the fiscal year of the church and submit a written report at the second quarterly business meeting following the end of said fiscal year. They shall also make other audits as required by the church. All reports are open to the public.

17) Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consider the list of offices to be filled and they shall submit a list to the Board of Deacons of qualified individuals before any individual is contacted. After the names are approved the Nominating Committee shall determine whether the individuals are willing to serve if elected.

Any active member of this church not a member of the Nominating Committee wishing to nominate another active member for office shall submit in writing those name(s) to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Pastor, who will serve as Chairman (in his absence the Chairman of the Board of Deacons will serve as Chairman), one Deacon, one Trustee and two other active members of this church. They shall be elected to this position at the July Quarterly Business Meeting.

18) Pulpit Committee

The Pulpit Committee shall be formed when deemed appropriate by the active church membership. The Committee shall bring to this church for consideration only one candidate at a time. Strict confidence must be observed by all members of this committee and after a man is chosen all records and files of other applicants shall be destroyed.

The entire Board of Deacons, one Trustee chosen by the Board of Trustees and two other active members of this church elected at a special business meeting shall constitute the Pulpit Committee. The two other active members of this church must be approved by the Board of Deacons. The Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall be the Chairman of the Pulpit Committee.

19) Dismissal of Officers

If any officer is unable or unwilling to fulfill the duties of his or her office, he or she should resign. If the resignation is not received within a reasonable time, no later than 30 days, the office shall be declared vacant by a majority vote of this church. The Pastor and Deacons have oversight in this matter.

Article VI- Business Meetings

- A. Regular Quarterly Business Meetings shall be held during the months of January, April, July, and October, each date being determined at the previous quarterly meeting. Quarterly reports will be given and other business will be conducted. The Annual Business Meeting of the church will be the October Quarterly Business Meeting with public notice to be given for two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The agenda will include the annual reports of the Treasurer, Secretary and other areas of ministry as requested, as well as any other proper business.
- B. Prior to the first (1st) of September there will be a Business Meeting for the election of officers.
- C. Special Business Meetings may be called at any time, providing public notice be given of the same on two (2) Sundays immediately preceding. Special Business Meetings may be called by the Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons, or a simple majority of active church members

requesting such of the Chairman of the Deacons or Secretary of the Corporation, providing the specific object, or objects, are clearly stated in the notice and no other business shall be transacted in such a meeting. The Pastor cannot moderate his own termination meeting, or any meeting in conjunction with his termination.

- D. Receiving or terminating members may be transacted when necessary at any stated meeting of the church without previous notice. Fifty percent (50%) of active church members shall constitute a quorum. Only active members eighteen (18) years of age and above shall be eligible to vote. The ordinary rules of deliberate assemblies will be observed in the transaction of business as set forth in Roberts Rules of Order Revised, by Henry M. Roberts, but are not to take precedent over any Rules of Order established by the church.
- E. Only active church members will be allowed to attend any and all business meetings or special business meetings.

Article VII- Financial Regulations

A. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year will begin January 1 and end December 31.

B. Monetary Principles

There is a Scriptural plan by which the work of the Lord is to be funded (Acts 20:35; Matt. 6:19-21). Conformity to this plan is a part of believer obedience as he gives to Christ, having first given his own self to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:5; Heb. 7:8). This plan calls for regular, universal (all members), corporate, proportional, and spiritual giving (1 Cor. 16:2).

All members of the church are expected to voluntarily contribute regular financial support to the church and to the advancement of the projects it sponsors through a corporately designated budget. We believe that income should be faithfully and cheerfully given (2 Cor. 9:6,7), and that giving beyond the tithe is encouraged, for all we have belongs to the Lord (1Chron. 29:14,16; Mala.3:10; Acts 4:32-35).

No monies are to be raised for the support of the church and it's various activities by any but the Biblical plan of tithes, offerings, gifts and sacrificial love considerations for the Lord's work.

From time to time the church, in the exercise of it's religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes of the church.

The church Treasurer and Financial Secretary are entrusted with the responsibilities of caring for the church treasury in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Article V, Section 3, Paragraph 11 and 12. The church will function with a single treasury with all funds being dispersed by check from the treasury. Designation will be through the Annual Church Budget by corporate act of the church at the Annual Meeting and other subsequent corporate acts.

Article VIII- Meetings of the Church

A) Use of Church Facilities and Name

Use of the church buildings other than for church sponsored activities will be by the consent of the Pastor and Deacons. No secret societies, nor groups who cooperate with or are members of any apostate organization will be permitted use of church facilities. All gatherings off the church property held in the name of the church shall be subject to the approval of the Pastor and Deacons.

B) Meetings of Public Worship

Public worship services shall be held regularly on Sunday, the Lord's Day. These services will normally be congregational in format with music that has spiritual goals and the preaching of the Word of God. Any special program must be approved by the Pastor and Deacons. All preachers must confess clearly the fundamentals of the faith.

There shall be a meeting for prayer and praise at least once each week unless extreme circumstances prohibit. Other church organizational events must not interfere with the stated services of the church, including special meetings.

Article IX- Ordination

Section 1- Ordination qualifications

Any member of this church or it's mission churches, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel.

Section 2- Ordination Procedure

Upon a conference with the Pastor and after the Pastor has approved the candidate for ordination, the Pastor shall call a council to examine and pass on the qualification of the candidate. The ordination council shall consist of ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate.

Article X- Tax-Exempt Provisions

Section 1- Private Inurement

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, it's members, Trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II hereof.

Section 2- Political Involvement

No substantial part of the activities of this church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 3- Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the church, the Trustees shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all the assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Trustees shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with the church's Statement of Faith.

Section 4- Racial Nondiscrimination

The church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

Article XI- Amendments

This Constitution and Bylaws may be revised or amended by majority vote of the active members present and voting at any regular church administration meeting, providing that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit by any active church member fourteen (14) days before the vote is taken.

Article XII – Policy Statement on Sexuality

The Christian Church of Rural Grove (CCRG) affirms biblical views of human sexuality. CCRG believes the Bible is God's authoritative Word with all matters for the church, therefore, we teach and promote abstinence from any and all sexual activity or expression outside the boundaries and the bonds of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

The Scripture declares that a sexual relationship or marriage between two individuals of the same sex as determined by birth conflicts with God's design and plan for man (Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:4-5; Romans 1:26-27; 7:1-4; Leviticus 18:12-18, 23). Therefore, anyone who practices this sexual immorality violates God's Word. No Marriage License or government approval of the "Homosexual Orientation" can validate that "Orientation" or "Lifestyle", for God's Prohibition cannot be satisfied or amended by human authorities.

In a biblical view, God defines one's gender at conception prior to birth. One is either a male or a female. Sexuality, however, while a gift of God, is often perverted to sinful ends by both men and women. Sexual expression is a moral choice. According to the Bible, God defines all forms of sexual immorality as sin, and God condemns any and all alternatives to

monogamous, heterosexual marriage (Genesis 2:23-24; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:31).

While others adopt permanent labels, we try to avoid labeling individuals based upon some spiritual struggle in their lives. In other words, we think of a person struggling with narcotics, not just a “drug addict”. Or we think of a person struggling with temptations to steal, not just a “thief”. We do this because we do not recognize any of these labeling designations as indicative of some kind of “unalterable state or condition” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). On the contrary, the Scriptures reveal that when someone is saved they are transformed. They are no longer identified by their old sinful lifestyles.

We are all “sinners”, but praise God this condition is not unalterable if we have accepted Christ as our Savior, for then we are “sinners saved by grace”. Yet sometimes the sin is more evident than the grace in our lives. People’s expression of human sexuality is influenced by this sin and grace struggle in the form of sexual temptations. The temptation in itself is not a sin; dwelling on the temptation, yielding to that temptation, becomes sin. People struggle with sexual integrity. Sometimes they yield to immoral behavior, whether heterosexual or homosexual. This act of sin does not make people unforgivable, nor does it mean that by the grace of God they cannot change. A struggle with sexual temptation, even an act of sexual immorality, does not turn a person into a labeled category. It simply means there is sin in that person’s life and Christ is the answer to that sin.

However, if an individual practices sexual immorality, they are violating God’s will and are liable to church discipline (see Article V, Section 2 for further explanation). The object of church discipline is repentance and reconciliation. If there is repentance, the process of restoration will be under the supervision and discretion of the Pastor and Deacons. However, if someone does not repent and submit to an accountable process of restoration they shall be excluded from membership (1 Corinthians 5).

All members of the Christian Church of Rural Grove must believe and live in harmony with this policy.

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