



# BYLAWS for Trinity Community Church

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PREAMBLE</b>	1
<b>ARTICLE 1: NAME</b>	2
<b>ARTICLE 2: PURPOSE</b>	2
<b>ARTICLE 3: STATEMENT OF FAITH</b>	2
<b>ARTICLE 4: AUTHORITY AND AFFILIATIONS</b>	4
<b>ARTICLE 5: QUALIFICATIONS, SELECTION AND SERVICE OF ELDERS</b>	4
<b>ARTICLE 6: BOARD OF ELDERS' MEETINGS</b>	6
<b>ARTICLE 7: SENIOR ELDER (LEAD PASTOR)</b>	7
<b>ARTICLE 8: OFFICERS</b>	7
<b>ARTICLE 9: LICENSURE AND ORDINATION</b>	8
<b>ARTICLE 10: DEACONS</b>	8
<b>ARTICLE 11: HIRED STAFF</b>	9
<b>ARTICLE 12: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS</b>	9
<b>ARTICLE 13: SUNDAY GATHERINGS AND MEMBER MEETINGS</b>	11
<b>ARTICLE 14: CHURCH DISCIPLINE</b>	12
<b>ARTICLE 15: CHURCH DISRUPTIONS</b>	12
<b>ARTICLE 16: PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES</b>	12
<b>ARTICLE 17: MUTUAL INTEREST</b>	12
<b>ARTICLE 18: DISSOLUTION</b>	13
<b>ARTICLE 19: INDEMNIFICATION</b>	13
<b>ARTICLE 20: BOOKS AND RECORDS</b>	13

## PREAMBLE

These bylaws govern the affairs of Trinity Community Church, a religious non-profit corporation. Trinity Community Church is organized under the state of Pennsylvania's Not-for-Profit Corporation Law (NPCL), as amended (the "Law").

These bylaws are intended to liberate the church to move swiftly and safely in fulfilling her purpose in the world, and they are also intended to protect her from unbiblical and destructive abuses of power. Each individual article must be read in light of the whole set of bylaws.

## ARTICLE 1: NAME

**1.1** Trinity Church was organized on September 1, 2010.

**1.2** Effective August 1, 2018, Faith Community Church (established in June, 1936) merged with Trinity Church (established October, 2011). Together they became "Trinity Community Church."

**1.3** This church is incorporated as Trinity Community Church. The operational name of this corporation (hereinafter also referred to as "church," "this church," "the church," "Trinity," or "TCC") is "Trinity Community Church," of Roslyn, Abington in the State of Pennsylvania.

## ARTICLE 2: PURPOSE

**2.1** TCC's purpose is as follows: Trinity Community Church exists to glorify God by making and mobilizing faithful disciples of Jesus.

**2.2** The vision of TCC shall be as follows: We envision every member of Trinity Community Church living in the renewing power of the Gospel so that God's fame spreads across the globe and our communities flourish spiritually, socially, and culturally through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**2.3** The core values of TCC shall be as follows:

**2.3.1** The Bible Is our Exclusive Foundation

**2.3.2** The Gospel Is Our Functional Center

**2.3.3** The Glory of God Is our Greatest Passion

**2.3.4** The Church Is God's Primary Method of Personal and World Change

**2.3.5** The Renewal of All Things Is our Hopeful End and Present Purpose

## ARTICLE 3: STATEMENT OF FAITH<sup>1</sup>

**3.1 The Scriptures.** We believe that the 66 books of the Bible are God's word revealed to us, written by God's apostles and prophets. In its original manuscripts it contains truth without error as it unfolds the story of God – his creation, our fall, his redemption and restoration; therefore it is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union. The Scriptures are the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

**3.2 The Triune God.** We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God. He is an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible worship, trust, and love. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but complementary offices in the great work of redemption.

**3.2.1 Father.** The Father is the first member of the Trinity, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all that come to Him through Jesus Christ. We believe that He orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace.

**3.2.2 Son.** Jesus, the Son, is coequal, consubstantial (i.e., having the same substance, nature, or essence), and coeternal with the Father. He was with the Father in the beginning and all things were made through him. He was incarnated into our world by being born of a virgin, becoming human that he might succeed where Adam failed and save all those who put their trust in his substitutionary, propitiatory death. He was raised bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, and will make a personal, visible return to earth.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the revised New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1853).

**3.2.3 Holy Spirit.** We believe in the Holy Spirit who is sent from the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. We believe that He is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration; it is His work to indwell, sanctify, instruct, empower for service, and seal until the day of redemption all who believe on Jesus Christ. We believe He indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. In all the divine attributes, He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father and the Son.

**3.3 The Fall Of Man.** We believe that man was created in holiness, in the image of God, and under the law of his Maker. But by rejecting God man fell from that state, and has ever since been under a curse. By nature we lack the holiness required by God; we are inclined to evil and justly condemned under God's eternal wrath, without defense or excuse.

**3.4 The Way Of Salvation.** We believe that the salvation of sinners is all of grace, through the life and cross-work of Jesus Christ. By the Father's design, Jesus freely took upon himself our nature, without sin, and honored the divine law by his personal obedience. By his vicarious, substitutionary death he made full atonement for our sins, breaking the curse. Having risen from the dead he is now enthroned in heaven, qualified to be our suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior in every way.

**3.5 Justification.** We believe God is "the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." When God justifies, the believer is declared righteous, not according to any works of righteousness which we have done, but only through faith in Jesus' cross-work. His perfect righteousness – as demonstrated by his active and passive obedience to God – is freely imputed (credited) to our account, declaring us simultaneously not-guilty and righteous. This brings us into a state of peace and favor with God.

**3.6 The Freeness Of Salvation.** We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel, and that it is necessary for all to accept them by obedient faith. Nothing prevents the salvation of the most detestable sinner on earth, except his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel, which brings upon him just condemnation.

**3.7 Grace In Regeneration.** We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again. Regeneration gives the mind and heart an inclination toward God by the power of the Holy Spirit, securing our voluntary and joyful obedience to the gospel. Its evidence appears in the fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

**3.8 Repentance And Faith.** We believe that repentance and faith are inseparable graces, accomplished in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. Being deeply convinced of our guilt, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God in humility, confessing our sin and pleading for mercy. At the same time we gladly receive Jesus and rely on Him alone as the only and all sufficient Savior.

**3.9 Election.** We believe that election in Christ is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign grace, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable. It excludes all boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy. It is the foundation of Christian assurance, joy, and worship. All who truly believe the Gospel are of the elect.

**3.10 Sanctification.** We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness. It is a progressive work begun in regeneration and carried on in the hearts of God's people by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter. The Lord sanctifies us through the continual use of the word of God, the killing of sin, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer.

**3.11 The Perseverance Of Saints.** We believe that only those who endure to the end are the true people of God, having their persevering attachment to Christ as the mark which distinguishes them from those who emptily profess faith. God's providence watches over their welfare, and they are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation.

**3.12 The Universal Church.** We believe that the universal church is made up of all true believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ, from the beginning of time until the end of time.

**3.13 The Local Church.** We believe a local church is a community of believers in Jesus led by qualified elders, who have covenanted to be on mission with Jesus together, regularly gather for the right preaching of God's word, participate in baptism and the Lord's Supper, and practice loving, redemptive church discipline.

**3.14 Baptism And The Lord's Supper.** We believe that Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in display of faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. This symbolizes our death to sin and resurrection to a new life, and is required for membership. By the Lord's Supper the members of the church, in eating the bread and wine, proclaim the gospel of Jesus' death our behalf. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not believe these ordinances convey saving grace upon the recipient. However, they are means by which God reveals His gospel to his people and brings loving encouragement into their lives.

**3.15 The World To Come.** We believe that this world is fading away and the fullness of God's kingdom is approaching. At the last day Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead from the grave to final judgment. A solemn separation will

then take place, the unrighteous facing God's eternal wrath and punishment in hell, and the righteous endless joy with God. The world will be "put to rights" and God's people will dwell with him on a restored earth for eternity.

## **ARTICLE 4: AUTHORITY AND AFFILIATIONS**

**4.1** The Bible is the supreme governing document. It is the final authority for all matters of faith and practice. The elders of the church have the final authority for the interpretation of the pertinent biblical texts on the aforementioned topics.

**4.2** TCC is first and foremost an ecclesiastical body of believers with Christ as its head.

**4.3** TCC is a self-governing body, autonomous from all other church bodies and independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the universal communion of followers of Christ and the benefit of a wider association, this church shall be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Sojourn Network. TCC may voluntarily affiliate with other churches of like faith and practice.

**4.4** TCC is secondarily a civil corporation, the governance of which is established by its Articles of Incorporation and these bylaws. The Articles of Incorporation and these bylaws, however, are subordinate to the Bible and must be interpreted in light of the Scriptures. The bylaws establish the ecclesiastical bodies that govern TCC.

**4.5** The authority of the church will be vested in the Board of Elders (hereafter the BOE, the elders, the elder team) who is responsible for governing the church, teaching the Word of God, and tending the flock of God in this church. The elders will be equal in authority but may specialize in function.

**4.6** The BOE shall have all of the rights, powers and responsibilities of a board of directors pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code, subject to any limitations under the Internal Revenue Code, the Articles of Incorporation of the church, and these bylaws.

**4.7** The minimum number of elders shall be a plurality of two. There is no maximum number.

**4.8** All elders shall be members of the BOE for the purposes of the Law.

## **ARTICLE 5: QUALIFICATIONS, SELECTION AND SERVICE OF ELDERS**

### **5.1 Biblical Terminology**

"Elder" is one of several terms used in the New Testament to describe the role of those men who govern the church. The Bible refers, interchangeably, to this office as "elder," "pastor" (or "shepherd"), and "overseer." Thus, Trinity seeks to use all three terms to refer to the same office (though, these bylaws primarily use the term "elder" to describe the office). Thus, the leadership and authority implied by "overseer" is to be joined to the protection, care, and nourishment implied by the use of "pastor"; and both of these are to be attached to the wisdom and mature discernment implied by the term "elder."

### **5.2 Vocational and Lay Elders**

Vocational Elders are defined as those elders who are in the employ of Trinity Community Church as part-time or full-time staff members. Lay elders are defined as those elders who are not in the employ of the church as a part-time or full-time staff member. Lay elders may or may not receive an honorarium for their service. Vocational elders may receive reasonable compensation for fulfilling their vocational responsibilities as employees of the church. A vocational elder shall neither vote on nor determine his own personal salary or benefits. The elder board shall maintain a simple majority of lay elders at all times.

### **5.3 Qualifications for Elders**

The minimum qualifications for TCC elders shall not be less than those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, including without limitation the requirement that TCC elders be men. In addition to the minimum qualifications given in Scripture, elders must be members who fully subscribe to TCC's Statement of Faith, display unity with the other elders, and are actively involved in the ministry of TCC. Additionally, they must consistently and competently pursue these biblical, pastoral duties: prayer and Scripture study, oversight of the church, care for the people in the church, exemplary living, right use of the authority God has given them, and correct and compelling Bible teaching. Seminary training is neither a necessary nor a sufficient qualification for eldership at TCC. However, all onboarding TCC elders will be required to complete a rigorous elder-in-training process.

### **5.4 Selection of Elders**

The elders possess sole authority to put forward new elders to be evaluated and affirmed (by vote of the membership). Prospective paid staff elders are hired after a vetting process (performed by the BOE) and affirmative vote by the congregation. Prospective lay elders are vetted and trained by the current elders and voted into office by the congregation. To be selected as an elder, the following process is generally followed:

#### **5.4.1 Identification or Aspiration**

A man is noticed by the current elders for his existing participation and leadership and is approached as a potential candidate for eldership. Also, a man may self-select or self-identify his desire to be an elder and communicate this desire to the eldership.

#### **5.4.2 Pre-Qualification**

The existing elder board will give affirmation to continue the process or tell the man “no” (and why) or tell the man that more growth and time is needed (and explain how to proceed).

#### **5.4.3 Qualification**

This will be a period of extensive review of the man (by checking with his wife, his children, his Community Group, his close friends, etc.). The goal is to determine theological agreement, philosophical agreement, ministry philosophy agreement, character, competency, personality fit, etc. The current elders must confirm the man in order to proceed. Should the man be disqualified at this point, a detailed explanation for this decision will be given to him.

#### **5.4.4 Training**

All men will complete a pre-defined course. The coursework will include: character, care, competency, chemistry with the elder team and doctrine. The timing and length of the training period will vary according to each man.

#### **5.4.5 Affirmation**

Upon conclusion of elder-in-training process, the man will be presented before the congregation. The congregation will have 2-3 weeks to approach the current leadership with any questions, concerns, observations, or encouragements. At the conclusion of the 2-3 week probationary period, a vote will be held in accordance with voting practices described in Article 12.4.

#### **5.4.6 Installation**

During a morning gathering, the elders will publically install and the church will publicly acknowledge the new elder.

#### **5.4.7 Exception**

In the case of hiring a paid staff elder from outside of TCC, the investigation, interviews, and due diligence carried out by the elders during the hiring process shall constitute and replace the above process. Upon his hiring, he shall be installed as an elder.

### **5.5 Terms for Elders**

#### **5.5.1 Length of Term**

Once a man becomes a staff elder at Trinity, it is expected that he will continue to serve as an elder indefinitely. Once a man becomes a non-staff elder it is expected that he will serve a 3 year term. After his 3 year term is up, the membership will affirm (via vote at a members meeting) him for another 3 year term.

#### **5.5.2 Lay Elder Sabbaticals**

After a period of 6 years of service, lay elders will take a 6-12 month sabbatical from pastoral duties to be refreshed and renewed in order that they might be voted on again by the membership for another 3 year term. The length of sabbatical will be a joint decision between the BOE and the pastor who is up for sabbatical. In the instance where a sabbatical would interfere with requirements for plurality, the “achieved” sabbatical will need to be postponed until a sufficient number of elders is on the BOE. The BOE reserves the right to afford a lay-elder sabbatical prior to “achieving” full term sabbatical “rights.”

#### **5.5.3 Staff Elder Sabbaticals**

Upon completion of six years of service, staff elders are required to take a 1-3 month paid sabbatical provided conditions allow and it is approved by the board of elders. The BOE reserves the right to afford a staff elder sabbatical prior to “achieving” full term sabbatical “rights.”

### **5.6 Duties of Elders**

**5.6.1** The duties of the elders shall include, but not be limited to: leading the church to fulfill the mission and vision of the church, shepherding members, oversight of the membership process, oversight of church discipline, oversight of care for missionaries, ministry contextualization and implementation, appointment and oversight of deacons, and oversight of financial stewardship.

**5.6.2** To promote efficient handling of its matters, the BOE may appoint various councils and committees from within its membership, the staff, and/or from the church at large. These councils and committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with powers specifically delegated by the BOE.

**5.6.3** The elders have the sole authority to call a church business meeting or other special meeting (unless otherwise noted in these bylaws).

### **5.7 Covenant of Elders (see Article 12.2 for Covenant of Members)**

**5.7.1** They commit to lovingly care for and seek the growth of her members in Christ (Hebrews 13:17; 1

Thessalonians 5:12).

**5.7.2** They commit to provide teaching, preaching, and counsel from Scripture (Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18).

**5.7.3** They commit that this teaching will span the whole counsel of God's Word (Acts 20:27-28).

**5.7.4** They commit to helping the congregation in times of need (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; James 2:14-17).

**5.7.5** They commit to meet the qualifications required by them in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-3; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

**5.7.6** They commit to pray for the membership regularly, particularly when they are sick (Acts 6; James 5:14).

**5.7.7** They commit to lead the exercise of church discipline when necessary (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1).

**5.7.8** They commit to guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).

**5.7.9** They commit to help the members become equipped to serve Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13).

**5.7.10** They commit to seek God's will for the TCC community to the best of their ability as they study Scripture and follow the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

**5.7.11** They commit to set an example and join the congregation in fulfilling the duties of church membership (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12).

### **5.8 Dismissal of Elders**

An elder shall be dismissed from office in the following instances (an illustrative, not exhaustive, list): moral impropriety, doctrinal error, bringing reproach to the name of Christ and/or TCC, incompetency, persistent disunity with the rest of the elders, and any other failure that would fall under the category of actions that demand church discipline. A taskforce established by the Board of Elders shall investigate a credible charge against an elder.

### **5.9 Rights Conferred to Elders**

Service as an elder confers the authority to preach, oversee the administration of the ordinances, marry, and enjoy all the rights and privileges accorded to licensed or ordained ministers under state law.

### **5.10 Governance Structure of the Elders**

The Board of Elders may structure and organize itself however it deems necessary for the sake of simplicity, clarity of communication, and efficiency of organization, according to the needs of the church and the size of the BOE. Any such restructuring must preserve the plurality of elders.

## **ARTICLE 6: BOARD OF ELDERS' MEETINGS**

**6.1** The BOE shall hold regular meetings in which they perform the duties laid out in Article 5.7. In addition, the elders shall vote on matters within their purview in BOE meetings.

**6.2** Additional special meetings may be called by either the chairman of the elders or by a majority of the elders.

**6.3** A selected member of the elders or staff shall make a reasonable effort to notify in advance the team of elders of any special meetings. Advanced notice of regular meetings need not be given.

**6.4** Members of the BOE may participate in a meeting of the Board by means of a conference telephone, video technology, or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting.

**6.5** Each elder shall have one vote.

**6.6** The BOE shall try to act by consensus. However, a 75% majority of the Board present and voting at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be sufficient to constitute an act of the BOE. Elders may not abstain from a vote.

**6.7** Fifty-one percent (51%) of the number of individuals serving on the BOE shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the BOE. The members of the board present at a duly called meeting at which a quorum is present may continue to transact business even if enough members of the BOE leave the meeting so that less than a quorum remains. However, no action may be approved without the vote of at least a majority of the number of members of the BOE in attendance required to constitute a quorum.

**6.8** The BOE shall keep a record of its proceedings.

**6.9** Any action required or permitted to be taken by the BOE may be taken without a meeting if all of the members of the BOE, individually or collectively, consent in writing or via electronic transmission to the action. Such action by written consent shall be filed with the minutes.

**6.10** Non-elders, including officers, may be present and have a voice at BOE meetings at the discretion of the elders, but they will not have a vote.

## **ARTICLE 7: SENIOR ELDER (LEAD PASTOR)**

**7.1** The BOE determines the “senior elder,” who functions as the first among equals and is the Lead Pastor for the church. It is the duty of the Lead Pastor to help lead the eldership and the rest of the church in effectively obeying God’s leading as revealed in Scripture.

**7.2** The Lead Pastor shall be called for an indefinite term of office.

**7.3** The primary responsibility of the Lead Pastor shall be preaching, casting vision, leadership development, administration, providing direction for the elders, and oversight of the BOE meetings. He shall be directly accountable to the elders, who will advise, assist, and evaluate both he and his work.

**7.4** For legal purposes, the Lead Pastor shall serve as the President of the Corporation.

**7.5** In addition to the stipulations of Article 5, the Lead Pastor shall be terminated when or if he fails to meet the moral and spiritual qualifications for office, is otherwise injurious to the church, negligent in the performance of his duties, or unable to fulfill his responsibilities due to age or sickness.

**7.6** The Lead Pastor may not be removed from his position unless a 100% quorum of the elders (excluding himself) vote for his termination. As a matter of due diligence, the elders will also call a meeting of the deacons and small group leaders to seek their input. They also may seek the advice of other trusted pastors.

**7.6.1** When appropriate, the BOE shall be gracious in the determination of the timing and amount of severance pay.

**7.6.2** If a vacancy is created as a result of the resignation, death or removal of the Lead Pastor, the vacancy shall be filled as soon as practical.

**7.7** In the event that a new Lead Pastor is to be called, the Pastoral Search Committee will be made up of the elders. As a matter of due diligence, the elders will also call a meeting of the deacons and small group leaders to seek their input on a given candidate.

**7.8** When the elders identify a candidate for the Lead Pastor position, the elders will present him to the TCC membership for affirmation. The elders will conscientiously listen to any objections from members of the congregation. They will discuss them at a subsequent BOE meeting.

**7.9** Should the elders appoint an interim pastor, he also will meet the qualifications for elders outlined in Article 5.

## **ARTICLE 8: OFFICERS**

### **8.1 Designation of Officers**

The elders shall designate the following state-required officers:

- (a) a President, who is also the Chairman and Lead Pastor.
- (b) a Secretary of the corporation from the active church membership.
- (c) a Treasurer of the corporation from the active church membership.

Officers (other than president) may or may not be members of the BOE.

### **8.2 Description of Officers**

#### **8.2.1 President**

The President shall perform such duties as are incumbent upon the office, including making certain that all orders and resolutions of the elders are carried into effect. The President shall have oversight of the elder meetings. The President’s duties shall include, without limitation: establishing meetings, setting the agenda and presiding over the meetings. Other members of the BOE shall have the rights to place items on the agenda as well. The President wields no more authority than any other member of the BOE. The President has one vote. In the event that the President is unable to be present at a meeting, he may assign a substitute to preside in his absence.

#### **8.2.2 Secretary**

The Secretary shall record (or cause to be recorded) minutes of all meetings of the elders and of the church and all votes taken at such meetings. He shall have charge of the official records and shall perform such other duties as are incident to the office of Secretary and as may be assigned by the elders or the President, under whose supervision the Secretary shall be.

#### **8.2.3 Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall serve as the overseer of the financial operations of the church. Paid church staff members shall be accountable to the Treasurer for management of the financial aspects of the church. The Treasurer shall provide regular financial reports to the BOE or President and help prepare reports that may be given to the church. In addition, the Treasurer shall perform such other duties and have other responsibilities as may be assigned to him from

time to time by the elders. The BOE may delegate all the duties of the Treasurer to others following consultation and consensus.

### **8.3 Election of Officers**

The Officers of the church shall be elected by a passing vote of the BOE and may serve terms of at least two (2) years, as long as they remain a member of TCC.

### **8.4 Removal of Officers**

Any Officer may be removed from office for valid cause (and reported to the congregation). A written notice of proposed removal of any Officer shall be given to such Officer by the Secretary, or by an elder appointed by the Chairman at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to effectuate such removal is to be taken, in order to ensure that the Officer is given reasonable opportunity to defend himself. The Officer shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his removal. Such removal shall take place only upon and after a passing vote of the elders. The Officer under consideration for removal shall not have voting rights while such removal is considered. Vacancies in the officers of the church by reason of death, resignation or otherwise, shall be filled by election of the elders as soon as is reasonably possible. Until such time, an elder may be appointed by the remaining elders to serve in such a vacancy. Resignations of officers shall be in writing to the President, effective on the date specified in the resignation or as determined by the BOE. (The resignation of the President shall be in writing to the BOE.)

**8.5** The BOE may also choose other officers (i.e. Vice President) and agents as it deems necessary.

**8.6** Each office must be held by a different person.

**8.7** All officers are to function in line with the Statement of Faith and Mission/Vision Statements of the church.

## **ARTICLE 9: LICENSURE AND ORDINATION**

### **9.1 Licensure**

Any member who, in the judgment of the BOE, fulfills the requirements of a deacon or elder and is called of God to the work of ministry (and has met the congregational voting requirements laid out in these bylaws) may be granted permission for licensing according to the terms of Pennsylvania. Licensing shall be ongoing until annulled by the BOE.

### **9.2 License Annulment**

TCC reserves the right to revoke ordination in cases such as moral failure or termination of employment. The decision to rescind or extend ordination shall be at the discretion of the Elders.

### **9.3 Ordination**

This church shall have authority to ordain any of its members who give evidence of divine call to ministry (and meet the above requirements). Ordination is considered to be for life, unless there is good cause to terminate an ordination.

**9.3.1** An elder-in-waiting will be installed at an installation service and commissioned as an elder after he (a) meets the requirements laid out in Article 5 of these bylaws (b) has been presented as a candidate to the congregation at a Members Meeting at least four weeks prior to installation.

**9.3.2** In the case of staff pastors, ordination is automatic as soon as he takes office; a ceremony may or may not be held, as determined by the BOE.

## **ARTICLE 10: DEACONS**

### **10.1 Office of Deacon**

This church shall have a spiritual office of deacon that is subordinate to the office of elder.

### **10.2 Qualifications of Deacons**

Deacons may be male or female and must meet the qualifications of a deacon set forth in the Bible (1 Timothy 3:8-13). Deacons must whole-heartedly affirm the Statement of Faith, bylaws, Mission Statement, Membership Covenant and other important documents of TCC.

### **10.2 Role of Deacons**

The general responsibility of deacons shall be to assist the elders in the ministry of TCC. Specific responsibilities, tasks, or ministries may be given to deacons by the elders. Scripture does not require deacons to be able to teach, indicating that their ministry is often oriented more in directions of mercy, service, and administration. This office provides wide latitude to promote the work of ministry in and through the church in a way that involves many members in weighty and meaningful ways while protecting the elders from becoming overwhelmed with the many needs of the flock.

### **10.3 Selection of Deacons**



The elders shall have the sole authority to present deacons for congregational approval. The elders shall communicate prospective deacons to the church no less than fourteen (14) days prior to a congregational vote. During the two week probationary period, comments received from the membership will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the BOE.

#### **10.4 Removal/Resignation of Deacons**

**10.4.1** Any deacon may be removed from office for valid cause. A written notice of proposed removal of any deacon shall be given to the elders at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to affect such removal is to be taken to ensure that the deacon is given a reasonable opportunity for defense. The deacon shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his or her accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his or her removal. The removal of a deacon requires a passing vote of the elders. Vacancies in the deacons of the church by reason of death, resignation or otherwise, shall be filled by election of the elders at their discretion in accordance with 10.3 above.

**10.4.2** A deacon may resign by delivering notice to the BOE or Lead Pastor, or, if due to a legitimate need, seek an extended Sabbath as determined by the BOE or Lead Pastor.

#### **10.5 Term Limits for Deacons**

Deacons will serve a term of three to five years with a period of 6-12 months off between terms. In some cases, the term may be much shorter, depending upon the specific commission given by the BOE.

### **ARTICLE 11: HIRED STAFF**

**11.1** TCC intends to hire full and part time staff members in order to carry out its purposes.

**11.2** The Lead Pastor shall supervise the daily activities of all hired staff.

### **ARTICLE 12: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS**

#### **12.1 Requirements**

**12.1.1** Membership within the Church is first predicated on one becoming a genuine follower of Jesus Christ through having responded by faith to the message of the gospel. In addition, members must be those who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession, who affirm and submit to the views of faith, doctrine, and practice of this church, who have been baptized, and who have been received into its membership according to the membership practices of this church. These practices shall be as follows:

**12.1.1.1** Membership Class with a Pastor & other prospective members

**12.1.1.2** Affirm TCC's Statement of Faith and Membership Covenant

**12.1.1.3** Membership interview with an elder

**12.1.1.4** Officially join and become a member of TCC in a members' meeting

**12.1.2** Membership in this church shall not vest in any member any proprietary rights in the Corporation, but shall only entitle the member to vote at a meeting of the members on those matters specifically set forth in the bylaws or that the elders choose to submit to the church membership for affirmation and/or approval. In such cases, voting privileges are restricted to members who are:

**12.1.2.1** In good standing (living in general, though not perfect, accord with the TCC Member Covenant)

**12.1.2.2** At least 18 years of age

#### **12.2 Responsibilities**

When anyone enters into relationship with God by grace and through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, they are entering into two covenants: (1) To journey with God for the rest of their lives and love him fully. (2) To journey with his other children in the community of the local church. Membership in this church is an official recognition of the above two covenants. Thus, membership within a local church carries both privileges and responsibilities. Members of TCC are held accountable to the responsibilities of general Christian obligations comprehensively though not exhaustively outlined within the Membership Covenant below (see Article 5.7 for Covenant of Elders). In signing the Membership Covenant, members attest that they have completed the membership process as instructed, read the covenant, and are willingly covenanting to the below stipulations (this covenant does not imply that members will never fall short of the goals, but that the desire of their heart will be to fulfill each of the responsibilities stated to the best of their ability as they actively depend on the grace of God). The TCC Member Covenant is as follows:

As those who have been brought by sovereign grace to repent and believe in Jesus Christ as the Lord, Savior, and Treasure of our lives, and having been baptized, we solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other as one body in Christ.

By the Spirit's help:

1. We joyfully submit to the Scriptures as the final authority on all issues.
2. We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, being slow to take offense, and diligently pursuing reconciliation when necessary.
3. We will remember one another in prayer, exercise affectionate care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully admonish and encourage one another.
4. We will pursue Jesus through the ordinary means of grace (like Scripture reading and prayer) and will encourage the same in one another.
5. We will regularly gather together, engaging in gospel community, rejoicing with each other's happiness, and bearing one another's burdens and sorrows.
6. We will seek to live carefully and honorably before the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, remembering that we have been buried with Christ and raised with him to walk in newness of life.
7. We will protect the worship, communion, and doctrines of this church.
8. We will welcome and humbly test the biblical instruction given by the pastors of this church.
9. We will give joyfully, sacrificially, regularly, and within our means to support the ministry of this church and the spread of the gospel to all nations.
10. We commit to make and mobilize faithful disciples of Jesus in our communities and around the world.
11. We commit to embrace the procedures of loving, gracious, and biblical discipline.
12. We commit that, when we move from this place, we will join a like-minded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.

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.

### **12.3 Role of Members**

**12.3.1** Each member plays a vital role in accomplishing the mission of the church. All believers have the right to approach God freely through Christ and the responsibility to study the Scriptures for themselves. All believers are gifted by the Holy Spirit for active ministry in the church. Believers are called to a shared life together, involving fellowship, discipline, and care. Thus, each member contributes greatly to the health or demise of the church.

**12.3.2** The congregation is involved in the evaluation and affirmation (through ballot vote) of eldership candidates (set forth by the current elders) and has a responsibility to bring charges against a leader in serious sin. All believers are responsible to reject false teachers and unbiblical leadership. Of course, the congregation must also recognize the value and role of elders in the church. The church should pray for their leaders, maintain the unity of the Spirit with them, and joyfully submit to their biblical leadership. At various points in the New Testament, the authors not only address the leaders of the churches to whom they write but the entire church as well. The NT authors call the church to be responsible to evaluate the teaching that comes from the pulpit. They are not to passively accept anything that comes out of the preacher's mouth but are to hold it up to the light of Christ and test it by his Word. If the teaching fails the test, the whole church is responsible to quit listening to the teacher (Gal 1; 2 Tim 4).

**12.3.3** Thus, members have the responsibility and opportunity to engage the elders on areas of theological disagreement. However, TCC membership carries with it the implicit understanding that the elders shall function as the interpretive authority (insofar as they do not stray outside the bounds of TCC's Statement of Faith and/or the bounds of orthodoxy) on biblical meaning and application for the purpose of doctrine, practice, policy and discipline.

### **12.4 Voting**

#### **12.4.1 Issues Requiring Congregational Vote**

The Members of TCC shall vote on the matters of:

**12.4.1.1** Installation of new elders (and reaffirmation of existing elders)

**12.4.1.2** Installation of new deacons (and reaffirmation of existing deacons)

**12.4.1.3** The annual budget

**12.4.1.4** Any loan that results in cumulative indebtedness exceeding twenty percent (20%) of the current, annual church operating budget

**12.4.1.5** Merger or dissolution of the church

**12.4.1.6** Any change to these bylaws or the TCC Statement of Faith

**12.4.1.7** Decisions relative to the acquisition or sale of real property

**12.4.1.8** Other actions deemed major and extraordinary by the elders

#### **12.4.2 Details of the Congregational Vote**

The time, place and nature of upcoming votes will be communicated to the church at least fourteen (14) days in advance. During the period between the proposal and the vote, members are encouraged to submit questions, comments and concerns, which will be considered by the elders on a case-by-case basis. Voting shall take place during a members' meeting. Only TCC members shall be permitted to vote on any matter. Voting results shall be communicated to members no later than seven (7) days following the vote.

#### **12.4.3 Percentages Required for Congregational Vote**

A motion shall be considered "passed" when the tallied "yes" votes are greater than or equal to a 3/4 majority.

Provided the notification requirements have been met (Article 12.4.2), a quorum will be understood to be met by the members present.

#### **12.4.4 Intra-Year Budget Amendments**

The budget may be amended by the elders without a congregational vote for reallocation or expansion provided the single expenditure or the cumulative changes do not exceed 10% of the total annual budget. For single expenditures or cumulative changes exceeding 10% of the total annual budget the amendment to the budget must be presented in writing to the congregation and approved by a 3/4 majority vote at a member meeting.

#### **12.5 Renewal and Removal**

Membership may be reviewed and renewed on a periodic basis. Members can be removed through (a) failure to renew their membership, (b) voluntary resignation of membership by one in good standing, (c) death, or (d) a decision by the elders as a result of the disciplinary process. Members are prohibited from voluntarily resigning their membership while subject to the formal disciplinary process.

### **ARTICLE 13: SUNDAY GATHERINGS AND MEMBER MEETINGS**

**13.1** TCC shall gather regularly for the purpose of worship, fellowship, and mutual encouragement.

**13.2** The ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper shall be observed on a regular basis.

**13.3** Member meetings shall be announced at least fourteen (14) days in advance of an instance requiring a vote (see more in Article 12). Provided the notification requirements have been met, a quorum will be understood to be met by the members present.

**13.4** Special Membership Meetings ("Family Meetings") may be called at any time at the request of the elders.

### **ARTICLE 14: CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

#### **14.1 Description**

Church discipline is a necessary mark of a healthy church. God involves his church in every aspect of his redemptive work.

This holds true even when God disciplines his children out of his love for them so they can share in his holiness (Heb.

12:4-11). In what is commonly referred to as "church discipline," God invites his church to participate with him as he carries out his loving, redeeming discipline. God carries out his discipline in and through the body of Christ (Matt. 18:15-20). Church discipline makes membership meaningful—members and leaders care about one another and commit to encourage each other to follow Christ, enabling the church to enjoy life with God and participate in his mission. The process of discipline within the church is explained more fully in the church's discipline guidelines.

#### **14.2 Purpose**

Church discipline has four broad purposes: (1) restoring relationships, (2) removing wickedness, (3) renewing God's people and (4) revealing God's love and glory. All church discipline should maximize the redemptive and protective efforts for all involved in accordance with Scripture.

#### **14.3 People**

##### **14.3.1 Recipients**

Church discipline involves TCC members who refuse to seek and obey God.

##### **14.3.2 Agents**

Church discipline also requires members who, in love, seek to encourage their wayward brother or sister to turn back to Jesus for mercy, forgiveness, and life. God's discipline is accomplished as the people of God seek to fight the good fight of faith together as a community of believers (1 Tim. 6:12). The elders oversee church discipline as they seek to shepherd the church.

#### **14.4 Process**

Jesus offers a general process for church discipline in Matthew 18:15-22. God's discipline expands (involving more people, to include elders) and escalates (involving increasing efforts of warnings, telling the church and removal). As agreed to in the member covenant, if a person is the subject of pending disciplinary action, the person consents and submits to the elders' continuing authority to complete the disciplinary process and not withdraw from membership.

#### **14.5 Reasons**

General categories of offenses in Scripture that may result in discipline include but are not limited to:

**14.5.1** Divisiveness (Titus 3:9-11; Romans 16:17-18; Hebrews 13:17)

**14.5.2** Repeated, scandalous, and unrepentant immorality (1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 6:9-10; Exodus 20:12-17)

**14.5.3** Rejection of critical doctrines of the Christian faith (1 Timothy 1:19-20; 6:3-5; 2 John 9-11)

#### **14.6 Waiver of Rights**

By joining this church, all members agree to submit themselves to the process of church discipline. Additionally, they waive their right to file any legal action against the church in a civil court or agency because of its discipline.

### **ARTICLE 15: CHURCH DISRUPTIONS**

**15.1** Any person deemed by a member of the staff or an elder to pose a physical or psychological threat to any person or to the church, or to be causing, about to cause, or capable of causing disruption to the religious services and activities of the church, shall be considered a trespasser on church property and may be ejected without delay. No church employee or elder shall incur any liability for acting in good faith in the interests of the church pursuant to this section.

### **ARTICLE 16: PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES**

**16.1** This church is prohibited from engaging in activities which violate its written doctrines.

**16.2** This church is also prohibited from condoning, promoting, or allowing any of its assets to be used for activities that violate its written doctrines.

### **ARTICLE 17: MUTUAL INTEREST**

**17.1** The behavior of anyone in fellowship with this church is of common interest to the Board of Elders and members.

**17.2** This church requires every elder, deacon, staff member, and church member to adhere to a lifestyle that is consistent with the doctrines of the church as taught in the Bible.

**17.3** Therefore, this church reserves the right to refuse service to any individual, whether member or not, that is not submitting their lifestyle to this scriptural mode of conduct. This refusal would include services, benefits, and any use of church assets.

### **ARTICLE 18: DISSOLUTION**

**18.1** TCC may be dissolved by a passing vote as defined in Article 12.4.3.

**18.2** In the event of dissolution, all outstanding debts will be retired, including any severance of current employee(s) granted by the elders. The remaining church property (or properties) and all proceeds there from, shall be given without cost to one or more like minded (in agreement with the TCC Statement of Faith) churches and/or non-denominational, evangelical, or tax-exempt religious organizations. The elders shall choose the recipients.

### **ARTICLE 19: INDEMNIFICATION**

**19.1** TCC has the power to indemnify (including the power to advance expenses to) its elders, officers, employees, and agents made a party to a proceeding, provided, however, that no such indemnity shall indemnify any such elder, officer, employee, or agent from or on account of:

**19.1.1** Acts or omissions of such elder, officer, employee, or agent finally adjudged to be intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law.

**19.1.2** Conduct of the elder, officer, employee, or agent finally adjudged to be in violation of (identify state code here).

**19.1.3** Any transaction with respect to which it was finally adjudged that such elder, officer, employee, or agent personally received a benefit in money, property, or services to which such person was not legally entitled.

**19.2** TCC may purchase and maintain insurance, at its expense, to protect itself and any elder, officer, employee, or agent or any person who, while as an elder, officer, employee or agent of TCC, is or was a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise against any expense, liability or loss, whether or not TCC would have the power to indemnify such person against such expense, liability or loss under PA's nonprofit act.

**19.3** Any repeal or modification of this Article shall not adversely affect any right of any person existing at the time of such repeal or modification.

**19.4** If any provision of this Article or any application thereof shall be invalid, unenforceable, or contrary to applicable law, the remainder of this Article, or the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid, unenforceable or contrary to applicable law, shall not be affected thereby and shall continue in full force and effect.

## **ARTICLE 20: BOOKS AND RECORDS**

**20.1** TCC shall keep correct and complete books and records of account.

(a) Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws shall be kept indefinitely.

(b) Lists of members, elders, and officers shall be kept current.

(c) Minutes shall be kept for a minimum of 3 years.

(d) Complete financial books, records of account, and legal documents shall be maintained for such a length of time as deemed appropriate by the BOE.

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Various aspects of these TCC Bylaws have been adapted from a variety of sources.