

Article I Declaration

On March 9, 2014, we the members of the First Christian Church of New Salem, Fayette County, PA adopt these bylaws for our guidance and procedure so that we may more perfectly fulfill Christ's mission for His church.

Mission Statement of the First Christian Church of New Salem,

RAISE THE BODY TO REACH THE BROKEN

Belief Statement

- We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity.
- That the Bible is the perfect Word of God
- That the Bible (not tradition, or human invention) is the authority within the church
- That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God (John 1:1-3; Matthew 16:16)
- That our relationship with God is based upon our obligation to follow His will (John 14:21; Acts 5:32; Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:9)
- That it is God's will that all people should repent and submit to Him through Jesus Christ (Acts 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9)
- Our Statement on Marriage

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning. Marriage sanctioned by God is one that joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage.

We believe that, in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church should abide by this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

- Souls are saved through:
 - o FAITH in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:16-18)
 - o REPENTANCE of our sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; Acts 2:38)
 - o CONFESSION of Jesus Christ as Lord (Romans 10:9-10)
 - o BAPTISM (Immersion) for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16; Colossians 2:11-12; Mark 16:16)

- That once we enter into salvation, we must be thereafter committed to the cause of Christ by: Assembling in Worship (Acts 2:42 & 47; Hebrews 10:25) Allowing the light of Christ to shine in us so that we may share the Gospel of Christ with others as we go (Matthew 5:16; Matthew 28:18-20)
- By living our lives in accordance with God's will as found in the Bible - His Word

It is important to know that salvation is a process we enter into. We do not "clean ourselves up" and then come to God - we submit to God, and then allow Him to work with us and in us to transform us by the renewing of our minds and spirits (Romans 12:1-2). Like all things, this takes time and dedication (commitment). Submit to God and allow Him to begin His work in you.

Article II Ordinances and Government

This church accepts the Old and New Testament as the inspired word of God. We are an independent Christian Church associated with the Independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. We are self-governing under the influence of no outside ecclesiastical body. We are accountable only to Christ.

We are a non-denominational church.

In other words, we do not have a hierarchy or an authority over the local congregation. The more layers we place between ourselves and God, the more opportunities there are to muddle the understanding of God's Word. God is infallible, but we are not. God has given us His Word (The Bible) and that Word becomes the guide for leading the local congregation. The only authority above the local church is God Himself. Nothing else is needed. It is our goal to simply follow God through His Son Jesus Christ and to help others to do the same. "In essentials, unity; in opinion, liberty; in all things, love."

Article III Membership

To be considered a member of the First Christian Church of New Salem, one must have become a follower of Jesus by fulfilling His plan of Salvation:

- Believe
- Repent
- Confess
- Be Baptized by immersion
- Living out one's faith

If these steps are completed while attending this congregation, one is automatically considered a member of this congregation. If these steps are followed in another congregation, one can express a desire for membership.

Decisions on matters of membership shall be handled by the Elders.

Article IV Church Leadership

Section 1: General Principles

The spiritual leadership and doctrinal decisions of the church will be handled exclusively by the Elders, in accordance with Scripture (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:7, 9; 1 Peter 5:1-2; Acts 20:17, 28-31; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 3:13-17). Any question of whether something is a spiritual or doctrinal issue shall be handled by the Elders and the Lead Pastor.

The business decisions of the congregation will be handled by an official Board. This Board will consist of:

- Lead Pastor
- Associate Pastors
- Elders
- Deacons
- Deaconesses
- Trustees

You must be a member of this fellowship for one year before being allowed to vote or hold an office on the official Board. (Exceptions may be made to this provision with the recommendation of the majority of the Elders AND the majority approval of the Board.)

Section 2: The Lead Pastor

A. The choosing of a pastor

1. The Elders shall be responsible for the search, selection, and presentation of potential pastoral candidates
 - a. The potential candidate will be required to preach and teach.
 - b. The potential candidate must have moral character that is consistent with the teachings of Scripture
2. The Board shall have the opportunity to meet with the potential candidate prior to his being presented to the congregation
3. The congregation shall vote whether or not to hire the potential candidate at a gathering designated for that purpose.
4. A candidate must receive 80% approval of those individuals who are eligible to vote and are present at the gathering in order to be appointed pastor.
5. The person fulfilling the role of the lead pastor, whether permanent or interim, must be male.

B. The duties of the pastor

1. The pastor shall be given the responsibility for the worship services of the church
2. He shall faithfully preach and teach the Word of God
3. He shall make a report to the official Board at each monthly meeting and to the congregation at the annual meeting
4. The pastor shall be under the direction of the Elders
5. SEE JOB DESCRIPTION

C. The salary of the pastor

1. He shall be paid a salary recommended by the Elders and approved by the official Board.
2. The salary package shall be reviewed on a yearly basis, during a December Board meeting.

D. Dismissal of a Lead Pastor

1. If a Lead Pastor acts in an unethical, immoral, or illegal manner; the pastor may be terminated.
2. If a pastor does not fulfill his required duties as per his job description, the pastor may be terminated.
3. If the Elders determine that a pastor should be terminated, they shall present that to the church Board and the Board will make the final decision.
4. If a pastor is terminated or chooses to resign, there shall be a notice of not less than 30 days given by either party.
 - a. The 30 day notice may be waived if mutually agreed upon by both parties.

Section 3: Associate Pastor(s)

A. The choosing of an Associate Pastor

1. The Elders and the Lead Pastor shall be responsible for the search, selection, and presentation of potential associates
 - a. The potential candidate will be required to perform ministry duties.
 - b. The potential candidate must have moral character that is consistent with the teachings of Scripture.
2. The Board shall have the opportunity to meet with the potential candidate prior to their being presented to the congregation
3. The congregation shall vote whether or not to hire the potential candidate at a gathering designated for that purpose.
4. A candidate must receive 80% approval of those individuals who are eligible to vote and are present at the gathering in order to be appointed associate pastor.

B. The duties of the Associate Pastor

1. The associate will be given a job description, prepared in advance by the lead pastor and the Elders.
2. The associate shall make a report to the Lead Pastor prior to the monthly Board meeting. This report will be presented to the board by the lead pastor.
3. The Associate Pastor(s) shall be under the direction of the Lead Pastor.
 - a. Although under the direct supervision of the Lead Pastor, all associates are also under the oversight of the Elders.
4. SEE JOB DESCRIPTION

C. The salary of the Associate Pastor(s)

1. The associate shall be paid a salary recommended by the Elders and approved by the official board.
2. The salary package shall be reviewed on a yearly basis, during a December Board meeting.

D. Dismissal of an Associate Pastor

1. If an Associate Pastor acts in an unethical, immoral, or illegal manner; the associate may be terminated.
2. If an Associate Pastor does not fulfill his required duties as per his job description, the associate may be terminated.
3. If the Elders determine that an Associate Pastor should be terminated, they shall present that to the church board and the board will make the final decision.
4. If an Associate Pastor is terminated or chooses to resign, there shall be a notice of not less than 30 days given by either party.
 - a. The 30 day notice may be waived if mutually agreed upon by both parties.

Section 4: Other Employees

A. Office Employees.

1. The Lead Pastor shall be responsible for the search, selection, and presentation of office employees to be hired.

B. Other Employees, permanent and/or temporary.

1. A duly appointed representative of the Board shall be responsible for the search and selection of proposed employees.
2. Once the contractor is hired, they fall under the direction of the Board's chosen representative.

C. The compensation packages of all employees shall be reviewed on a yearly basis, during a December Board meeting.

- D. Dismissal of all other employees of the First Christian Church of New Salem
1. If employees do not fulfill their required duties as per their job description, they may be terminated by the Lead Pastor after consultation with the Elders.
 2. When it is determined by the Elders and Lead Pastor that an employee has acted in an unethical, immoral, or illegal manner, the employee shall be terminated.
 3. If the Lead Pastor determines that an employee should be terminated for any other reason, he shall consult with the Elders before taking action.

Section 5: The Nominating Team

- A. The selection of the nominating team
1. The nominating team shall consist of at least one Elder whose term is not currently expiring and at least two members of the official board whose terms are not currently expiring (chosen by the chairman of the board).
 2. The nominating team shall be appointed at least two months prior to the annual congregational meeting.
- B. The duties of the nominating team
1. The nominating team shall receive nominations from the congregation. All nominations must be made to the nominating team at least three weeks prior to voting.
 - a. To hold an office on the Church Board, one must be a Member of this fellowship (According to Article 3).
 - b. See Article 4, Section 1
 2. One of the Elders on the nominating team shall present the slate of nominees for vote.

Section 6: The Elders

- A. The selection of Elders
1. The candidate shall meet the qualifications set forth in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
 2. An Elder, according to Scripture, must be a male.
 3. Election of officers shall be done according to Article 4, Section 10
 4. The Lead Pastor will become an Elder after five (5) years of continual service as Lead Pastor and having reached an age agreeable with the current Elders. (If he does not desire the position, he may decline.)
 - a. MUST meet Biblical requirements of Eldership
 - b. This will be an appointed position, as per the bylaws.
 - c. The Lead Pastor will remain an Elder as long as he remains Lead Pastor.

B. The duties of Elders

1. The Elders shall be responsible for the spiritual well-being of the congregation
 - a. Spiritual growth
 - b. Shepherding and care
 - c. Seeing that sound doctrine is maintained
 - d. Teaching
 - e. Protect the flock from false teachings, unspiritual influences, and dissension
 - f. Discipling those who work with them
 - g. Providing discipline as necessary
 - h. Other responsibilities as outlined in Scripture

C. Removal of an Elder

1. If an Elder fails to maintain the scriptural and spiritual qualifications of his position, he shall be removed by the remaining Elders.
2. If an Elder is proven guilty of an offense that could cause damage to the reputation of Christ's Church, he shall be removed by his fellow Elders.
3. If an Elder is accused of an offense that could cause damage to the reputation of Christ's Church, he may be temporarily removed from office by his fellow Elders until the accusation is investigated.
(Accusations must be substantiated, e.g. 1 Timothy 5:19)

Section 7: The Deacons

A. The selection of deacons

1. The candidate shall meet the qualifications set forth in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:8-13).
2. Election of officers shall be done according to Article 4, Section 10

B. The duties of deacons

1. As ordained by God in His Word, the deacon shall serve the congregation as directed by the Elders.
2. The deacons shall set before the congregation an example of faithfulness to God and to serving His Church.
3. SEE JOB DESCRIPTION

C. Removal of a deacon

1. If a deacon fails to maintain the scriptural and spiritual qualifications of his position, he may be removed by a majority vote of the Elders.
2. If a deacon is proven guilty of an offense that could cause damage to the reputation of Christ's Church, he shall be removed by the Board.
3. If a deacon is accused of an offense that could cause damage to the reputation of Christ's Church, he may be temporarily removed from office by the Elders until the accusation is investigated. (Accusations must be substantiated)

Section 8: The Deaconesses

A. The selection of Deaconesses

1. The candidate shall meet the qualifications set forth in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:8-13).
2. Election of officers shall be done according to Article 4, Section 10

B. The duties of a Deaconess

1. As ordained by God in His Word, the deaconess shall serve the congregation as directed by the Elders.
2. The deaconesses shall set before the congregation an example of faithfulness to God and to serving His Church.
3. SEE JOB DESCRIPTION

C. Removal of a deaconess

1. If a deaconess fails to maintain the scriptural and spiritual qualifications of her position, she may be removed by a majority vote of the Elders.
2. If a deaconess is proven guilty of an offense that could cause damage to the reputation of Christ's Church, she shall be removed by the Board.
3. If a deaconess is accused of an offense that could cause damage to the reputation of Christ's Church, she may be temporarily removed from office by the Elders until the accusation is investigated.
(Accusations must be substantiated)

Section 9: The Trustees

A. The selection of Trustees

1. The candidate shall be of high moral and spiritual character.
2. Election of officers shall be done according to Article 4, Section 10

B. The duties of the trustees

1. The trustees shall have responsibility for the maintenance and repairs of all properties and vehicles of the church.
2. The trustees shall have the responsibility for the administration and enforcement of the facility usage policy.
3. SEE JOB DESCRIPTION

C. The removal of a trustee

1. If a trustee fails to maintain a high moral and spiritual character or fails to perform his/her duties in an acceptable manner, he/she may be removed by a majority vote of the Elders.
2. If a trustee is proven guilty of an offense that could cause damage to the reputation of Christ's Church, he/she shall be removed by the Board.

3. If a Trustee is accused of an offense that could cause damage to the reputation of Christ's Church, he/she may be temporarily removed from office by the Elders until the accusation is investigated.
(Accusations must be substantiated)

Section 10: Process for the Election of Officers

- A. Nominations shall be covered under Article 4, Section 5
- B. The Election of officers shall be held at a congregational meeting.
- C. Procedural Requirements
 1. Must be present at the congregational meeting in order to vote.
 2. Voting shall be done with a paper ballot.
 3. A candidate for church office must receive 80% approval of those individuals who are eligible to vote and are present at the congregational meeting in order to serve as an officer.
 4. The chairman of the board shall choose at least 3 officers of the official board whose terms are not expiring to tally the ballots. Those officers must consist of at least one elder and, if at all possible, a deacon and a deaconess.
- D. Installation of Officers
 1. All officers selected to serve shall immediately be considered a part of the Church Board.
- E. Length of Term for Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, and Trustees
 1. Elders shall be elected for a term of 2 years.
 - a. The only exception to this would be if more than 70% of the elders' terms expire in one year, one or more may run for a 1 or 3 year term to ensure that there will always be a plurality of elders.
 2. Deacons shall be elected for a term of 2 years.
 3. Deaconesses shall be elected for a term of 2 years.
 4. Trustees shall be elected for a term of 2 years.

Section 11: The Official Board

- A. The official board shall elect its own Chairman and Vice-chairman from the Eldership. Other offices that shall be chosen are: Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Board Secretary, and Assistant Board Secretary.
 1. This is to be done at the first meeting following the annual congregational meeting.

2. Each officer of the board shall serve a one year term
 - a. If an officer of the Board does not fulfill his/her required duties as per his/her job description, he/she may be removed from the position by majority vote of the official Board, but remain a member of the Board.
 - b. If an officer of the Board does not feel that he/she can perform the required duties as per his/her job description, he/she may resign from the position, but remain a member of the Board.

B. Duties of the Board Officers

1. Chairman of the Board

- a. At least 10 weeks prior to the annual congregational meeting, the treasurer and assistant treasurer shall audit all accounts of the church, except general fund (which includes: facilities management fund, information systems fund, transportation fund, bell fund, and general savings).
- b. Once per year, the Chairman of the Board shall select an outside auditor to audit all accounts that are the responsibility of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.
- c. The first meeting after the election of officers, the chairman shall appoint the initial teams for the coming year. These teams may be altered by the chairman of the board throughout the year.
- d. The chairman of the board shall be an elder and shall have the right to table any motions.
- e. The chairman of the board shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the board.

2. Vice Chairman of the Board

- a. The vice-chairman shall fulfill the duties of the chairman should the chairman be absent or unable to fulfill his duties.

3. Treasurer

- a. He/she shall pay all the expenses of the church as directed by the board.
- b. A report shall be made to the board at its monthly meeting and annually to the congregation at the annual congregational meeting.
- c. At the direction of the board, and under the authority of the treasurer, these and the duties related to all specially designated funds can be delegated to others.
- d. He/she is not responsible for the counting or depositing of offerings (regular or special). This responsibility shall be handled by volunteers approved by the Official Board.
- e. If the Treasurer is not an elder, deacon, deaconess, or trustee; the Treasurer shall have no vote on the Board.

4. Assistant Treasurer

- a. In the event that the Treasurer is unable to fulfill his/her position, the Assistant Treasurer shall assume the duties of the Treasurer.
- b. The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer as needed.
- c. If the Assistant Treasurer is not an elder, deacon, deaconess, or trustee; the Assistant Treasurer shall have no vote on the Board.

5. The Secretary of the Board
 - a. He/she shall record the minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Official Board (including any and all congregational meetings) and shall be responsible for the safekeeping of said minutes.
 - b. He/she will have a copy of the By-Laws at each regular and annual meeting.
 - c. If the Secretary is not an elder, deacon, deaconess, or trustee; the Secretary shall have no vote on the Board.

6. Assistant Secretary of the Board
 - a. The Assistant Secretary shall fulfill the duties of the Secretary should the latter be absent or unable to perform his or her duties.
 - b. If the Assistant Secretary is not an elder, deacon, deaconess, or trustee; the Assistant Secretary shall have no vote on the Board.

7. Financial Secretary
 - a. He/she shall be responsible for recording offerings received via assigned offering envelopes.
 - b. He/she shall be responsible for providing an end of the year statement to those individuals who have assigned offering envelopes.
 - c. This position shall be appointed by the Board and need not be a member of the Board.
 - d. If the Financial Secretary is not an elder, deacon, deaconess, or trustee; the Financial Secretary shall have no vote on the Board.

8. Assistant Financial Secretary
 - a. The Assistant Financial Secretary shall fulfill the duties of the Financial Secretary should the latter be absent or unable to perform his or her duties.
 - b. The Assistant Financial Secretary shall assist the Financial Secretary as needed.
 - c. If the Assistant Financial Secretary is not an elder, deacon, deaconess, or trustee; the Financial Secretary shall have no vote on the Board.

Article V Meetings

Section 1: The church shall hold an annual congregational meeting. The date of the meeting will be determined by the Elders and approved by the Official Board.

Section 2: A special congregational meeting for the purpose of conducting business may be held at any regular worship service of the church. If a valid objection arises to the holding of the meeting, a time shall then be set of no less than one week in the future for the meeting to take place. (The Elders will decide if the objection is valid).

Section 3: Special congregational meetings may be called by one-third of the whole board, or by the majority of the Elders, or by one-third of the members of the church. (Refer to Article VII)

Article VI Amendments

The By-Laws may be amended at any annual meeting of the congregation or at any special meeting called for that purpose. The only stipulation is that three (3) weeks' notice containing the proposed changes shall be given to the congregation.

For a change to be added to the By-Laws, at least two-thirds of those who are eligible to vote and are present at the meeting must approve said change.

Article VII Quorum

A Quorum for the transaction of business at a congregational meeting of the church shall consist of at least a majority of the Elders and 40% of those who are eligible to vote.

A quorum for the transaction of business at a regular or special meeting of the church Board shall consist of the chairman and/or vice chairman and 40% of the Board OR the chairman and/or vice chairman and at least 2 Elders, 2 Deacons, 2 Deaconesses, and 2 Trustees. If either of those two conditions are met a quorum shall have been reached.

Article VIII The Church Year

The church year shall begin January 1st of each year and close December 31st of the same year.