

# River Cities Christian Church Constitution

## Article I – Name and Foundational Principles

### Section 1. Name

This organization is incorporated under the laws of Wisconsin as River Cities Christian Church, Inc.

### Section 2. Statement of Faith

We hold to and teach the following biblical beliefs:

1. We believe the Bible is the word of God, written without error in the original manuscripts, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21).
2. We believe in one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deut 6:4; James 2:19; Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14).
3. We believe that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man (John 1:1-2, 14). He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and came to earth in order that He might redeem sinful men through shedding His blood on the cross for our sins (Luke 1:34-35; Matt 1:23; Rom 3:24-25; Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 2:24).
4. We believe Jesus rose bodily from the dead (Matt 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:36-43). His ascension was bodily (Acts 1:9-11) and He is now seated at the right hand of God interceding for us (Eph 1:20-21; Heb 9:24; Rom 8:34).
5. We believe Jesus is coming again to earth (Acts 1:10-11; 1 Thess 4:16-18) and He will judge the living and the dead (Rev 20:11-15; 2 Cor 5:10).
6. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26-27) but fell into sin and became alienated from God and that man is totally unable to remedy his lost condition (Rom 3:22-23; Eph 2:1-3).
7. We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 10:8-10; Eph 2:8-10; John 1:12).
8. We believe that baptism by immersion into water is for all persons who believe the gospel and accept Jesus as both Lord and Christ (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-39; Acts 8:12).
9. We believe that the church is the visible body of Christ on earth which exists to reach out to the unsaved and to build up those who are saved (Matt 17:18; Rom 12:4-8; Eph 4:1-16).
10. We believe that the Holy Spirit, whom every believer receives at conversion (Eph 1:13-14; Acts 2:38-39; Rom 8:9) is the agent of regeneration and renewal for believers in Jesus Christ (Titus 3:5-7), that He makes the presence of Jesus real in them (Eph 3:16-17), that He comforts (Acts 9:31), guides (John 16:13), convicts (John 16:8-11), gives gifts to believers (1 Cor 12:1-11) and enables them to live in ways that honor Him (Rom 8:12-17; Gal 5:22-23).
11. We believe that marriage is the God ordained union of one man and one woman (Gen 2:23-24; Matt 19:4-6; Eph 5:31-32; Mark 10:6-9; Heb 13:4; 1 Cor 7:2).

## Article II – Mission and Purpose

### Section 1. Mission Statement

River Cities Christian Church exists to love and to glorify God Almighty. We are dedicated to making disciples of and for Jesus, to reaching the unsaved with the gospel, to encouraging and serving those in need, and to building up believers by equipping them for full, on-going devotion and service to the Lord Jesus Christ and His church.

### Section 2. Purpose Statement

“To know Him and to make Him known.”

## Article III - Government

### Section 1. Autonomy

- a. It is specifically understood that this church is strictly autonomous and congregational in its government. It is subject to no other ecclesiastical body whatever.
- b. It is to be understood that this church is at liberty to cooperate as it desires with other congregations.

### Section 2. Church Board

The Church Board shall be comprised of the pastors plus the Officers of the congregation. Newly hired associate pastors shall have a one year probationary period before becoming a voting member of the Church Board. The Church Board shall care for all the routine business of the church. They shall bring before the congregation significant business for its approval such as:

1. Major capital expenses (building, grounds, etc.) requiring outside financing with a loan term of one year or greater
2. Extending a call to a pastor
3. Election of Officers of the congregation
4. The annual budget. They shall present the annual budget to the congregation for its review and input. Final approval of said budget shall be given by the Church Board at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

#### Section 3. The Eldership

- a. Responsibility for the spiritual oversight and spiritual welfare of the church is vested in the pastor(s) and the congregation's elders, if any. The number of elders shall be established by the Church Board according to the need and availability of scripturally qualified men.
- b. This church takes the Bible as its only rule of faith and practice, and Christ as its only creed. The decisions taken and policies laid down by the elders and/or pastor(s) on spiritual matters are always to be in accordance with the Bible's teaching for the church.

#### Section 4. Deacons

- a. Deacons, if any, shall be responsible for any specific duties assigned to them by the Church Board. The number of deacons shall be determined by the Church Board and by the availability of scripturally qualified men or women.
- b. *The deacons shall from among themselves select a head deacon who shall be an Officer of the congregation and a member of the Church Board.*

### **Article IV - Membership**

#### Section 1. Becoming a member

##### a. Eligibility for Membership

1. Membership within the worldwide body of Christ, the Church, is a result of confession of faith in the blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin. Requirement for membership in RCCC is essentially the same. Anyone is eligible for membership in RCCC who has truly come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through repentance and faith and is endeavoring to walk faithfully with him.
2. For those living together as a couple we interpret this to necessitate a marriage relationship as defined by our Statement of Faith (see Article I.2.11 above).

##### b. Membership Process

1. Those considering membership are encouraged to attend a membership class. This class is informational in nature and attendance is not a prerequisite for membership.
2. A person desiring membership in RCCC will submit a Membership Form to the pastor or one of the elders of RCCC.
3. At least one pastor and one elder of the church will meet with the person to review their Membership Form.
4. Upon consensus of the pastor and the elders the person will be received into membership on behalf of the congregation and presented to the church as a new member on the following Sunday.

##### c. Grandfathered Members

1. This membership process will take effect December 1, 2020.
2. Those who have attended RCCC services a minimum of 9 times in the 6 months prior to December 1, 2020 will be recognized as members without completing this process provided they meet the eligibility requirements of Article IV.1.a (above).
3. The congregation grants the pastor and elders discretion in determining grandfathered membership status in situations with unique circumstances.

##### d. Voting

1. All members 18 years or older shall have the right to vote at any official meeting of the congregation.

e. Membership Roll

1. The pastor and church secretary shall create and maintain a current official Membership Roll.

Section 2. Expectations of Members

a. A member will promote the unity of the church:

1. By acting in love towards all members (1 Pet 1:22)
2. By refusing to gossip (Eph 4:29)
3. By cooperating with the leadership (Heb 13:17)

b. A member will share in the responsibilities of the church:

1. By praying for its growth and spiritual maturity (1 Thess 1:2)
2. By inviting those without faith and weak in faith to attend (Luke 14:23)
3. By warmly welcoming those who visit (Rom 15:7)

c. A member will participate in the ministry of the church:

1. By discovering and using his/her spiritual gifts and talents (1 Pet 4:10)
2. By being equipped to serve by the church leadership (Eph 4:11-12)
3. By allowing God to develop within us the heart of a servant (Phil 2:3-4,7)

d. A member will support the testimony of the church:

1. By faithful worship attendance (Heb 10:25)
2. By living a Christ-like lifestyle (Phil 1:27)
3. By giving regularly (1 Cor 16:2)

Section 3. Removal of Membership

a. Membership in RCCC will be removed for the following reasons:

1. Written request by the member to remove membership
2. Request for transfer of membership to another church
3. Death of a member
4. Absence at Sunday worship for more than six months

i. A member who has not attended worship services for 6 months or longer shall no longer be considered a member and will be removed from the official membership roll.

ii. Members having extended absences due to circumstances beyond their control, such as severe illness, job assignment, or military duty, shall inform the pastor or one of the elders of their anticipated absence in order to retain their membership status, in spite of their inability to attend Sunday services over that period of time.

5. Completion of church discipline proceedings

i. Causes for removal by church discipline

(a) With the understanding that all of us will continue to struggle with sin this side of heaven and are in need of patient forbearance as we grow in grace, nevertheless, according to the command of Scripture RCCC will remove from its fellowship any member actively, knowingly, and unrepentantly engaged in serious and flagrant sins (1 Cor 5:11; Titus 3:10; and 2 Thess 3:14) as well as any member expressing views that represent a significant and dangerous deviation from the historic Christian faith as it has been understood for the past 2,000 years (Rom 16:17-18; 1 Tim 1:19-20; 2 Tim 2:16-18).

ii. Procedure for removal by church discipline

(a) Prior to removal of membership the church will seek to resolve the issue following the steps commanded by Christ in Matt 18:15-17.

(b) If the person remains unrepentant they will be removed from membership (1 Cor 5:1-13).

(c) A simple majority vote of voting members present at a special congregational meeting will be required as the final step to remove the member from membership.

(d) All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and shall be guided by a concern for redemption and restoration rather than punishment.

iii. Restoration of membership after church discipline

(a) Membership will be restored upon the repentance of the individual per 2 Cor 2:6-7.

(b) A simple majority vote of voting members present at a special congregational meeting will be required to restore membership.

#### Section 4. Leadership Positions

- a. Senior Leadership positions shall be as listed in Article III.A of the RCCC By-Laws.
- b. To be eligible to serve in a Senior Leadership position within RCCC, a person must fulfill the following requirements:
  1. Be a member of RCCC
  2. Be baptized by immersion as a believer
  3. Be active in the congregational life of RCCC during the prior 6 months. To be considered active, a member must have attended Sunday services a minimum of 12 times over the prior 6 months. This shall not be a requirement for any interim pastor or any person newly hired for a pastoral position.
  4. Be 18 years or older
- c. Any member 18 years or older will be eligible to serve in other leadership positions as listed in Article III.B of the RCCC By-Laws.
- d. Any person will be eligible to serve in support positions as listed in Article III.C of the RCCC By-Laws provided they meet the qualifications for those positions as outlined in the position descriptions in the By-Laws.

### **Article V - Officers and Pastor(s)**

#### Section 1. Selection of Officers

- a. The Officers of the congregation shall be: the chairman, the secretary, the treasurer, all elders (if any) and the head deacon (if any). The trustees shall be the chairman, the treasurer and the secretary of the church. All Officers of the congregation shall be active members of River Cities Christian Church who are 18 years or older. No two trustees shall be members of the same immediate family (husband-wife, parent-child, or sibling-sibling).
- b. The Church Board shall be responsible for the nomination of candidates for all offices except the head deacon, who shall be selected by the deacons themselves. The Church Board shall be responsible for the nomination of all deacons. The Church Board shall establish qualifications and length of term for each position, with no term to exceed three years. The Church Board may delegate, if it wishes, the nomination process to a nominating committee of its own choosing. All candidates for the office of elder shall have been approved by the senior pastor prior to being nominated by the Church Board. The secretary shall for each office draw up a list of nominated persons found qualified and willing to serve. The resulting list shall be posted for at least two Sundays prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- c. All Officers of the congregation shall be elected by a two-thirds vote of the congregation in accordance with Article VI. If more than one candidate is running for the same office, but none receives a two-thirds vote on the first ballot, then the top two vote getters shall be put to a vote. If neither candidate receives a two-thirds vote, then the one receiving more than 50% shall be put to a vote. If two-thirds then vote in favor of the single candidate, that candidate shall have been elected. If the candidate does not receive a two-thirds vote, then the office shall remain open until the Church Board meets to select a new candidate and a Special Congregational Meeting is called for the purpose of voting on the new candidate(s).
- d. No person may serve more than two consecutive terms in any one office except for the office of elder.
- e. Mid-term vacancies of Officers of the congregation shall be filled by vote of the Church Board. A two-thirds majority of the Church Board shall be required for approval of each candidate.

#### Section 2. Selection of a Pastor

- a. The Officers of the congregation shall constitute the Pulpit Committee when a pastor is to be called, and shall recommend one candidate at a time to the congregation for approval. Approval shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the eligible voting members of the congregation present at a Special Meeting called in accordance with Article VI.
- b. A contract shall be negotiated with the prospective Pastor by the Officers of the congregation or their designee, with final approval by the congregation at a Special Meeting.

- c. Either the Officers of the congregation, upon approval by a two-thirds majority of the eligible voting members present at a duly called Special Meeting of the congregation, or the pastor may terminate a pastor's service. A 60 day notice shall be required from either party.

## **Article VI - Meetings and Elections**

### Section 1.

The proceedings of all official meetings shall follow the general structure of Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise determined by the Church Board.

### Section 2. Official Meeting

- a. The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held on a Sunday between the August and September Church Board meetings. Notice of the meeting time and place shall be posted and announced for at least two Sundays prior to the meeting. The chairman of the Church Board shall preside. The purpose of the meeting shall be to:
  1. transact business of the congregation,
  2. receive annual reports from the senior pastor and various offices,
  3. to present to the congregation and receive approval by the Church Board of the annual budget for the following year,
  4. and to elect Officers and deacons of the congregation.

Two-thirds of the Church Board plus any other members present shall constitute a quorum. All eligible church members shall be entitled to one vote each on all matters requiring a congregational vote. All newly elected Officers of the congregation shall take office at the next meeting of the Church Board. If a person elected becomes unable or unwilling to serve before the next meeting of the Church Board, this will be treated as a mid-term vacancy (see Article V.1.e above).

- b. Monthly Meetings shall be held by the Church Board on a previously agreed upon date to conduct the regular business of the church. Two-thirds of the Church Board members shall be the required quorum to conduct business. All items requiring a vote shall be approved by a simple majority vote of the Church Board unless a greater majority is required in this constitution. Other church members shall not be able to vote.
- c. Special Meetings of the congregation shall be called by the Church Board as it deems necessary to present any unusual business of the congregation for review and/or approval. The time and location of all Special Meetings shall be announced at least two Sundays prior to the meeting. Two-thirds of the Church Board plus any other members present shall constitute a quorum. Decisions shall be made by a simple majority vote, unless a greater majority is required elsewhere in this Constitution. All eligible church members shall be entitled to one vote each.

## **Article VII - Constitution and By-Laws**

### Section 1. Constitution

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote at any specially called or annual meeting of the congregation, in accordance with Article VI. All proposed amendments shall be posted in a conspicuous place in the church building and shall have the attention of the congregation verbally called to them during the services of at least two Sundays before the time of the meeting at which they are to be voted upon.

### Section 2. By-Laws

The Church Board shall write and approve or amend by two-thirds majority, any by-laws it deems necessary to allow an orderly implementation of the responsibilities assigned by this constitution.

## **Article VIII - Property**

### Section 1. Trustees

The trustees shall serve as legal agents of the church and shall hold all church properties in trust. They shall have no power to buy, sell, lease or mortgage any buildings or real estate of the congregation without a two-thirds majority vote of the members with voting rights that are present at a duly called annual or special meeting of the congregation. The trustees shall have signing authority on church bank accounts. The trustees may designate other specific church members as having signing authority on a church bank account as necessary with majority approval from the Church Board.

### Section 2. Final Dissolution

In the event that this congregation should be permanently dissolved, all remaining assets shall be given to an historically evangelical organization that will further the mission and purpose of River Cities Christian Church—"To know Him and

to make Him known." Responsibility for choosing this organization shall fall to the remaining members of the congregation at the time of dissolution determined by a two-thirds majority vote.

This revision of the Constitution of River Cities Christian Church became effective on Sunday, August 27, 2023.

Signed:

Senior Pastor

Chairman

Elder

Elder

Associate Pastor

Secretary

Treasurer

Head Deacon

  
  
  
  
  
  
  
