

## **The Christian Life Center's (CLC) Leadership Structure, Mission and Doctrines**

An imperfect system filled with men and women of integrity will function far better than a perfect system filled with men and women who lack integrity. The people we choose are as important as the system we use.

**CLC's mission statement:** To make it simple for people to connect to Jesus and one another.

### **What do we believe at CLC?**

- *We believe the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God and that men were moved by the Spirit to write the words of Scripture. Therefore, the Bible is without error.*
- *We believe in one God who exists in three distinct persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). We believe that Jesus Christ is the member of the Trinity (the Son of God) who became flesh to reveal God to all people and to become the Savior of the lost world.*
- *We believe that all humans, both male and female, were created in the image of God to have fellowship with Him, but became alienated from that relationship through sinful disobedience. As a result, humanity is totally incapable of coming back into a right relationship with God by one's own effort.*
- *We believe that that human life begins at fertilization. God, in his infinite sovereignty, uniquely formed human beings and gave them a special dignity, personal freedom, and individual accountability among all the works of creation. Human beings have been made for relationship with God and to be good and faithful stewards of creation. God created each person's inmost being, knitting each person together in his/her mother's womb. As God's individualized and personal creation, each person is fearfully and wonderfully made. God has ordained all the days of each person's life before they came to be.*
- *We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, salvation only occurs when a person places his or her faith in the death and resurrection of Christ as the sufficient payment for his or her sin and allows us to be reunited as sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father for all eternity.*
- *We believe that every Christian should live for Christ and not for his or her self. By obedience to the Word and daily yielding to the Spirit, every believer will mature and become conformed to the image of Christ.*
- *We believe that the church is the body of Christ of which Jesus Christ is the Head. The members of the body of Christ are those who have trusted by faith the finished work of Christ. The purpose of the church is to glorify God by loving Him and by making Him known to a lost world.*

- *We believe that marriage involves the union of one man and one woman in permanent sacred fidelity. It is God alone who has ultimate authority to prescribe and describe the marital relationship. Furthermore, sexual intimacy is only properly exercised and pursued within the confines of a marital relationship.*

**Purpose:** This document outlines the guidelines CLC employs in selecting key leadership and managing ongoing systems and procedures. In addition, this document provides accountability for ministry leaders and key information for the church body. While impossible to anticipate all future contingencies, the intent of this document is to provide flexibility to meet long-term changing needs.

The CLC government is built around six teams of people:

1. The Board of Elders
2. The Nominating Committee
3. The Directional Leadership Team
4. The Personnel Team
5. The Deacons
6. The Congregation

## **1. Board of Elders**

The Board of Elders is comprised of seven to twelve people, including the senior pastor and associate pastor who are both Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO) pastors and as such members of the presbytery. The presbytery is an administrative body representing all the local congregations of an ECO Presbyterian district.

Both the senior pastor and associate pastor are permanent members of the board of Board of Elders.

## **The Purpose of the Board of Elders**

The Board of Elders function primarily as discerners and guardians of the organization. They are not expected to oversee specific projects or ministry areas in their capacity as board members. They function as overseers for the entire organization establishing guidelines for staff compensation, providing approval and oversight for the church budget, and evaluating the effectiveness and direction of the organization according to three criteria:

- CLC's mission: To make it simple for people to connect to Jesus and one another.
- CLC's resources.
- CLC's doctrine.

## **Teaching and Ruling Elders:**

The primary spiritual leaders of a congregation are the Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders, who are also called overseers or pastors in the New Testament. Elders teach or preach the Word and shepherd the souls of those under their care (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9; Heb. 13:17).

Like the apostles, the teaching elders' primary role is one of preaching the Word of God. Regarding Ruling Elders, "Ruling" in the title is about measuring, not flexing power. It is their role to measure the spiritual health of the congregation entrusted to their care and make decisions that equip and strengthen the congregation's discipleship. Ruling elders follow the example of Christ and lead by service while working with moderators of session and pastors.

ECO Polity 2.02 The Ministry of Elders (p.20): Elders are given authority and responsibility, along with pastors, to oversee the spiritual health of the congregation as well as the congregation's faithfulness to God's mission. Elders may also be asked to preach and teach. Elders shall be elected by the congregation.

The Board of Elders (also referred to as The Session) do not determine programming. This responsibility falls to the Directional Leadership Team. However, the Board is responsible for evaluating programming based on its appropriateness and effectiveness in furthering the overall mission of CLC.

The senior pastor will meet with the Board of Elders at least monthly.

## **The Authority of the Board of Elders**

For all practical purposes, the Board of Elders have final say in any and all matters concerning the overall direction of the organization. Unless otherwise specified in this document, anything voted on by the Board of Elders requires a two-thirds majority of all in attendance in order to pass. A quorum of two-third of the members must be present and voting at the time any vote is taken.

## **There are four decisions that the Board of Elders may not make without Congregational Membership approval at a Congregational Business Meeting.**

1. The Board of Elders may not appoint a new senior pastor.
2. The Board of Elders may not approve debt for the organization in excess of one-half of the previous year's annual operating budget.
3. The Board of Elders cannot change or establish the denominational affiliation of CLC.
4. The Board of Elders may not change the Articles of Incorporation, or the Constitution.

In addition to functioning primarily as discerners and guardians of the organization, The Board of Elders will serve in a secondary capacity as a Staff/Church Ministry Liaison. This liaison role for all Elders will support staff volunteer recruitment and ministry support, including ministry implementation and deacon oversight. A Staff/Ministry Liaison is an individual chosen from the leadership of a particular ministry team to represent that group. Moreover, each liaison serves as a channel for communication to and from the various ministries and church congregants. Each liaison commits to serve a one-year term and may be appointed for an additional term.

### **The Dismissal of a Board of Elders Member**

If it becomes apparent that a board member should not serve, that member may resign, or by three-fourths vote of the Board of Elders, excluding the board member under consideration, be immediately retired from the Board of Elders. The position will remain vacant until the next regularly scheduled year or until the Board of Elders choose a suitable replacement.

### **The Session**

#### **Purpose and Composition**

Every congregation is governed by its Board of Elders that are referred to as the Session. (See ECO Polity 1.0601) The Session consists of the elders duly elected by and from the covenant partners of the congregation, along with the congregation's installed pastors, associate pastors and, in accordance with the congregation's own rule, assistant pastors who have been elected by the congregation. Also, by its own rule, the congregation shall determine the number of elders, their length of service, and the ordering of the session.

#### **Meetings of the Session**

The Senior Pastor shall ordinarily moderate all meetings of the Session. If it is impractical, the pastor may ask another pastor or an elder to preside, with the Session's approval.

The Session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly, and shall meet at the call of the moderator, at the request of two or more elders, or at the request of the Presbytery. Full minutes of the meetings and actions of the session shall be maintained and shall be available to any covenant partner of the congregation or at the request of the presbytery (supplied by the Clerk of Session).

#### **The Responsibilities of the Session (For more details see ECO polity 1.0603)**

a. The session has responsibility and authority for governing the congregation and guiding its mission for Christ in the world. In the Reformed tradition the marks of the church are the proclamation of the Word, the Sacraments rightly celebrated, and the

exercise of discipline. Therefore, the session shall: Provide for the worship and educational life of the congregation; provide a place where the congregation may regularly worship; provide for the regular preaching of the Word by persons properly approved; oversee the planning and the ordering of the worship services of the congregation; lead the congregation in ministries of evangelism, compassion, and justice; and develop and nurture relations with other congregations.

b. Authorize and provide for the regular celebration of the Lord's Supper; authorize the administration of Baptism.

c. Plan for and provide an effective disciple-making, ministry-discernment process for the congregation and new believers, equipping them to be missional Christians and being faithful to nurture them into spiritual maturity and significant ministry.

d. Elect elder commissioners to the presbytery and may propose to the presbytery matters of common interest or concern as well as proposals to amend this Organization Structure document.

e. Maintain a roll of covenant partners and a roll of baptisms.

f. The session shall adopt and administer an annual budget and shall publish it to the congregation.

g. Arrange for an independent financial review annually and shall publish the report to the congregation and to the presbytery.

h. Evaluate the congregation's ministry and mission and report to the presbytery for reasons of mutual accountability and the sharing of best practices.

### **Senior Pastor and Associate Pastors**

Pastors are members of the presbytery (see ECO polity 2.0401). Thus, their ministry and calling are approved by the presbytery or its authorized team that is responsible for examining and credentialing pastors. All members of the presbytery have voice in its deliberations; and the right to vote is given to those serving in a pastoral capacity in a congregation. In order to ensure maximum deployment for the kingdom of God, as well as ensuring the core integrity of theology and ministry, categories and responsibilities of pastors are as follows:

a. Pastor/Head of Staff – Pastors/Heads of Staff or Co-Pastors/Heads of Staff are called by the congregation and installed by the presbytery and shall have the responsibility to moderate session and congregational meetings. They are members of presbytery with voice and vote.

b. Associate Pastor – Associate pastors are called by the congregation and installed by the presbytery upon recommendation of the session. They are members of presbytery with voice and vote.

c. Assistant Pastor – Assistant pastors are called by the session or pastor/head of staff according to rule of the session. The session, acting as a pastor nominating committee, may propose to the congregation that an assistant pastor be called as an associate pastor. Assistant pastors are members of presbytery with voice and vote, and may, upon election by the congregation, serve on the session with voice and vote in accordance with the congregation's own rule.

## **2. Nominating Committee and the Selection of Board of Elder Members**

At a time as set by the Board of Elders, but no less frequently than annually, the Elder Nominating Committee will determine a slate of Covenant Partners necessary to meet at least the minimum number of Board members to be voted on by the congregation. The Nominating Committee will be comprised of four Covenant Partners of the CLC congregation, as voted on at a Congregational Business Meeting, and at least three existing Elders. The Directional Leadership Team will be consulted as to a nominee's circumstances and ability to serve, but has no vote in the process.

New Board of Elders members are selected by the nominating committee and then voted on by the congregation. Each new Elder will go through training for the office of Elder. Board of Elders members serve one three-year term, and are required to rotate off for one year before becoming eligible for another term. Once someone is an elder, they are an elder for life, so this ministry continually provides good leadership in the life of the church.

### **Desired Qualifications of a Board of Elders Member**

A Board of Elders candidate must have been a Covenant Partner of CLC for at least one year prior to their selection to the Board, have been actively involved in ministry at CLC for at least two years, and fully subscribe to the organization's mission and values. (See above)

Furthermore, all elders are required to meet the qualifications for elder/overseer as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-11, Titus 1:5-9.

*It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?) and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he*

*must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

*1 Timothy 3:1-11*

*For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.*

*Titus 1:5-9*

### **3. The Directional Leadership Team (DLT)**

The senior pastor selects the Directional Leadership Team. The purpose of this group is to determine strategy, steps, and programming, give vision to the various ministries of the organization, and oversee the day-to-day operations. The executive staff is accountable to the senior pastor. All executive staff members are required to meet the character qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

The DLT is currently comprised of the following staff members:

Senior Pastor (Responsible for Overall Vision)

Chief Resource Officer (Responsible for managing CLCs assets and resources)

Worship Director (Responsible for the Build Excitement Strategy of CLC)

Discipleship Pastor (Responsible for the Build Foundations Strategy of CLC)

Outreach Pastor (Responsible for the Build Bridges Strategy of CLC)

Family Ministries Director (Responsible for all family ministries at CLC)

Tech Director (Responsible for our online church campus)

### **4. The Personnel Team**

The Personnel Team serves the Board of Elders of the church in an advisory capacity on issues related to personnel administration. It does not exist to manage the interface between staff and congregation (that is the work of the session) and it does not exist to provide managerial or leadership oversight to the staff team (that is the work of the senior pastor).

The Personnel Team should make themselves available to receive reports of potential employment policy violations. While the Personnel Team is available to help staff process concerns and limitations, the Personnel Team will encourage staff to discuss issues directly with the employee in question or their direct supervisor. The only exception to this rule is a complaint that involves a potential professional misconduct issue. In this instance, the Personnel Team will investigate the issue and create and implement a plan of recourse, reconciliation, and restoration. This plan should be approved by the Board of Elders.

The Personnel Team may be asked to participate in a mediatory means with a staff member and his or her supervisor if it is the appropriate course to reconciliation. Otherwise, it is not the intention of the Personnel Team to meet one on one with staff members outside of Personnel Team responsibilities previously laid out. The Personnel Team must exercise caution and discretion when dealing with sensitive topics brought forward to avoid the spread of misinformation before all pertinent facts and information are gathered.

The Personnel Team is comprised of 3-4 current or previous Elders (with at least one current Elder on the team) and the Senior Pastor as an ex-officio member, though on occasion it may be advisable for the committee to meet without the pastor. All members should be able to keep confidences and be supportive of people and the church. They should be open minded, fair handed, reasonable, and well-balanced. This committee is chosen by the senior pastor and elder board and submitted for approval to the Board of Elders annually. Members of this team may also serve as an ad hoc advisory and support team for the Senior Pastor.

## **5. Deacons (To Be Established 2022)**

Deacons are servant leaders. They are ministers, serving God by serving others. Service is a value at CLC, we grow best while serving. It is our goal to create a layer of servant leadership that supports and encourages all the ministries of the church. We are all called to serve, in fact Jesus modeled service in word and deed (see Matthew 23:11) It is our hope at CLC to widen the scope of serving ministries.

**Deacons:** The biblical role of deacon is to take care of the physical and logistical needs of the church so that the elders can concentrate on their primary calling.

This distinction is based on the pattern found in Acts 6:1–6. The apostles were devoted “to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (v. 4). Since this was their primary calling, seven men were chosen to handle more practical matters in order to allow the apostles the freedom to continue with their work. Like the seven, deacons serve the congregation in whatever practical needs may arise.

Deacons are identified and recruited by Church Staff and Elders to serve three year terms.

As Earl S. Johnson Jr. puts it, “The office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of sympathy, witness, and service after the example of Jesus Christ. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, of exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, warm sympathies, and sound judgment should be chosen for this office” (G-6.0401). It is a ministry of caring; a ministry of love; a ministry of compassion; and a ministry of prayer, and community service (G-6.0402).

In general, deacons function as servants, ministering to the body in practical ways. No matter how they serve, Scripture makes it clear that ministering as a deacon is a

rewarding and honorable calling in the church. Moreover, Deacons' hearts go out to those in distress, to members who have suffered loss, to neighbors in the hospital, to prisoners, to friends who have lost their jobs, to new parents who are confused by a wonderful, sudden, and challenging change in the responsibilities of life, to new members who need a word of welcome, to members who are shut-in and lonely and cannot leave their homes, to people in the community who have lost their way and can no longer find God, to those who are economically oppressed and do not have adequate places to live or enough to eat, to any people who need to experience the love of Christ in concrete ways.

Clearly deacons are not the only Presbyterians who provide these ministries of sympathy and caring. All Christians are charged to love their neighbors and care for one another. But the deacons provide an organized way of bringing the love of Jesus Christ to the church and the community. Deacons, by assisting the pastor(s) in pastoral care, by working closely with the session to bring justice to the village, town, or city in which they are located, by taking seriously the admonition to love one another from the heart (1 Pet. 1:22), and by fulfilling the command of Jesus to love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12) in ways for the whole world to experience and see.

## **6. The Congregation** (and details about Congregational Meetings: See ECO Polity page 14-15)

Meetings of the congregation may be called by the session, by the presbytery, or by the session when requested in writing by one-fourth of the covenant partners. Adequate notice of the meeting shall be given including announcement in worship a minimum of two weeks prior, as well as the congregation's other avenues of communication.

### **Business that shall be conducted at a Congregational Meeting**

The following business items shall be conducted at a congregational meeting, but not necessarily at every congregational meeting; nor are congregational meetings limited to just the following:

- a. Electing elders as well as deacons, if the congregation chooses [see 2.03]).
- b. Calling a pastor/head of staff, associate pastor, or to request the dissolution of such calls.
- c. Buying, mortgaging, transferring, or selling real property.
- d. Requesting that presbytery dismiss the congregation to another presbytery of ECO or requesting that the presbytery dismiss the congregation to another Reformed body. (Either requires a super-majority of two-thirds of the covenant partners present).

e. Approving any amendments to the congregation's articles of incorporation, bylaws or other corporate governing documents and dissolution, merger and any other corporate action requiring voting member approval.

f. Authorizing assistant pastors to serve on session with voice and vote by the congregation's own rule.

Whenever permitted by law, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same congregational meeting.

ECO Polity page 16

1.0504 Moderator

The pastor/head of staff shall ordinarily moderate all meetings of the congregation. If it is impractical, or if considering actions pertaining to the pastor/head of staff, the pastor may ask another pastor or elder to preside with the session's approval.

1.0505 Secretary and Minutes

The clerk of session shall ordinarily serve as secretary for all meetings of the congregation. If it is impractical, the congregation shall elect a secretary for that meeting. The session shall review and approve the final form of the minutes.