



# WALKER'S CHAPEL

Book of Church Order  
Bylaws &  
Book of Confessions

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# BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER

## Preamble

### ***Jesus Christ, the Head and King of the Church***

Jesus Christ, upon whose shoulders the government rests, whose name is called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end; who sits upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth, even forever (Isa. 9:6–7); having all power given unto Him in heaven and in earth by the Father, who raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand, far above all principalities and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and has put all things under His feet, and appointed Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all (Eph 1:20-23); He, being ascended far above all heavens, that He might fill all things, received gifts for His Church, and gave all offices necessary for the edification of His Church and the perfecting of His saints (Eph 4:10-13).

Jesus, the Mediator, the sole Priest, King, Prophet, Savior, and Head of the Church, contains in Himself, by way of eminency, all the offices in His Church, and has many of their names attributed to Him in the Scriptures. He is Apostle, Teacher, Pastor, Deacon, Bishop, and the only Lawgiver in Zion.

It belongs to His Majesty from His throne of glory to rule and teach the Church through His Word and Spirit by the ministry of men; thus, exercising His own authority and enforcing His own laws, for the edification and establishment of His Kingdom through these humble means of the Ministry, Word, and Sacraments, throughout the earth, to the end of the world.

Christ, as King, has given to His Church patterns of government, community, and worship, for the maturing of his people and the manifestation of His glory in the world. All things needed for doctrinal truth and the practice of godliness are contained in His Word, the Church's supreme authority. The only standard by which all matters of faith and life may be determined is the voice of Christ, speaking through His inspired Word.

Since the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven, He is present with the Church by His Word and Spirit, and the benefits of all His offices are effectually applied by the Holy Spirit through means of the Word proclaimed and through the sacraments of baptism and the celebration of the Lord's Table. All these benefits are received by faith alone as the sole instrument of union with Christ and His body.

### ***Constitution Defined***

The Constitution of Walker's Chapel, which is subject to and subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the inspired Scriptures, consists of its doctrinal standards set forth in the Book of Confessions and comprising this document containing the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline all as adopted by the Church.

### ***The Church, the Body and Bride of Christ***

We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We believe that the Church is the family and royal priesthood of God the Father, the body and bride of God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship and temple of God the Holy Spirit. We believe that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church. We believe that the Church is one in all ages and is founded upon Christ Jesus, crucified and risen, as the Chief Cornerstone. We believe that through the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ will fulfill His commission as the Last Adam to fill the earth with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea and to subdue every enemy of God, death being last of all.

We acknowledge that the Church of God, purchased with Christ's blood, is manifested in diverse but united particular congregations in all the earth. We believe that the Church is one in Christ, as all Christians and all local communions are joined together as living members of His mystical body. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, to which all of God's people belong. This mystical union in Christ is the basis and root of our organizational unity.

We believe that it is the duty of each Christian to be committed to a Biblically-ordered congregation, under the rule of elders, ordinarily located in their geographical area. Walker's Chapel, of Madison County, Virginia, has been so constituted by Christ through His duly-ordained representatives as a particular congregation of the body of Christ. We believe that churches are to be connected with one another in a conciliar fashion, as representative elders come together in assemblies to share in the governance of the Church. Thus, for the purpose of manifesting our oneness in Christ, as well as mutually-cooperative shepherding, oversight, accountability, and discipline, we are in the process of seeking affiliation in the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC). Our desire for mutual ministry and mission is not, however, limited to the churches of any particular denomination. We long for the oneness of Christ's many congregations to be manifested publicly and governmentally in the world, through shared councils and common ministry and mission. This unity need not mean uniformity, but it should mean that bonds of mutual love and trust are evident.

We long to labor with other congregations in doing the work of the kingdom in Word, Sacrament, and service. Our motto towards our fellow Christians and sister churches is the familiar refrain: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity."

### ***Preliminary Principles***

This organization is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code. The purpose of the Church's existence is to fulfill Christ's mission of gathering the nations into His kingdom and maturing them into His obedient and faithful people through means of Word, sacrament, and service, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father. At the center of our church's life is gathered worship, in which God renews covenant with us and gives us the gifts of His kingdom.

As an elder-ruled church, we hold to a representative form of government. The church is ruled by the Elders, which consists of men ordained to the offices of teaching and ruling elders, as described elsewhere in this Constitution. The Constitution of Walker's Chapel consists of the "Book of Church Order" and the "Book of Confessions." As a local congregation, Walker's Chapel may choose its own officers (in conjunction with the approval of presbytery in the case of elders laboring in word and doctrine), admit members and perform excommunications, withdraw from the CREC and pursue a different denominational connection at any time, revise its Constitution, and possess its own property. This Constitution does not claim to perfectly or comprehensively reflect the Bible's teaching on Church polity; while our desire is to be as biblical as possible in our given circumstances, this document remains a fallible human product. As such, officers and members are not expected to agree with every detail, but do need to be willing to live under its terms.

Walker's Chapel desires to be at peace with all other faithful churches. We lament the fragmented state of Christendom and long for the day when God's churches will be united as one visible family under the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see our pursuit of membership in the CREC as a way of practicing biblical ecclesiastical polity under compromised circumstances. We long for an ever-widening connection with the Church catholic. Assuming we are eventually accepted into the CREC, if Walker's Chapel ever desires to leave the CREC for another denominational affiliation, Walker's Chapel may do so with the Elders' approval and a two-thirds majority vote, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Walker's Chapel shall aspire to only leave in a peaceable and orderly manner, treating our brethren with respect, and with a commitment to joining another

association of faithful churches as soon as possible. Walker's Chapel acknowledges that God alone is Lord of the conscience; that while reason and tradition are helpful guides in Church life, all human authorities are subordinate to the Scriptures in matters of faith and practice; that Christ has instituted a government and officers in His Church to preach and protect the purity of the gospel, to administer baptism and the Lord's Table according to the prescriptions of the Word, and to shepherd, discipline, and serve the flock as needed; that the Church has genuine authority, as its officers and courts represent the Lord Jesus Christ on earth, with the power of the keys to bind and loose; that Church councils and courts may and have erred, and therefore all Church power is but ministerial and declarative, not absolute; that we are called to dwell together in brotherly love, bearing with one another, forgiving one another, and praying for one another, so that the world may know that we are Christ's disciples and that He is the One sent by the Father; that we are to seek to maintain the bond of peace and unity in the faith with all other faithful Christians, ministering alongside one another in word and deed, no matter their denominational connection; and that we are duty-bound to work for the end of the denominational system and the establishment of a truly catholic church in the world.

## **1. MEMBERSHIP**

### ***1.1. Membership in Walker's Chapel as a Particular Body***

- 1.1.1. Membership in our local expression of Christ's Church is constituted by a profession of faith, expressed in baptism. Baptism is the rite of initiation into the New Covenant and the catholic Church; the one baptized maintains good standing in the Church by walking in faith, by the grace of God.
- 1.1.2. Membership at Walker's Chapel is "catholic," open to Christ's disciples of all races and ages. While baptism marks out membership in the catholic Church, professing believers, together with their children, ordinarily enter the membership of Walker's Chapel, as a local body, when they have approval of the Elders. New members are expected to affirm the membership vows before the Elders and ordinarily will be expected to publicly state their membership vows in front of the congregation in the context of a worship service, as the Elders deems prudent.
- 1.1.3. Those joining Walker's Chapel from outside the catholic Church officially, as new believers or covenant children, join at their baptisms; those already baptized join Walker's Chapel when the Elders has approved and received their transfer of membership (or if they have no Church they are currently members of, they join when the Elders approves their profession of faith).
- 1.1.4. As part of our stated effort to seek unity wherever possible in the Church at large, Walker's Chapel allows for differing views on the mode and administration of baptism within our body. Members or aspiring members whose understanding of ecclesiology calls for a stronger continuity with the patterns of the Old Covenant (i.e., the "matrix" of the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic Covenants) may consider the baptism of their children as a continuation of God's grace and faithfulness to families as exhibited in his relationship to Israel under those previous covenants. For ease of identification, we will refer to this understanding as the "covenant family" view. Those whose understanding of ecclesiology calls for a departure from the previous patterns of God's work in and through families in the Old Covenant may espouse the "believer's baptism" view, which requires a conscious profession of faith from the individual prior to baptism. While these two perspectives essentially create the potential for a differing ecclesiology within our body, we believe that our ongoing work of seeking clarity in the associated issues through preaching/teaching, discussion, and fellowship has the potential to create greater unity in these matters longterm.

- 1.1.5. Per the allowance for differing views on baptism above, heads of households will determine which of these views their families will follow. Their decision will be communicated to the elders, and their families will be treated accordingly. As part of the desire for unity, the head of household will articulate his or her Biblical reasons to the elders for choosing either the covenant family or believer's baptism view.
- 1.1.6. For those who espouse a "covenant family" view of baptism, parents (or sponsors/guardians) may take vows on behalf of their children who cannot yet express their faith. Children born to at least one member parent (or belonging to a member sponsor/guardian) are regarded as heirs of the covenant (Gal 3:29) even before baptism, and become full members of Walker's Chapel at their baptisms.
- 1.1.7. The elders of Walker's Chapel are responsible to examine the orthodoxy of all candidates for membership, and to see that their lives do not contradict their professions. The Elders should make sure that all candidates coming for membership by transfer have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Elders may delegate the task of meeting with prospective members to a commission of two elders. Interviews with prospective members should include a discussion of the candidate's Christian experience/life, the content of the membership vows, and ways in which the Church and new member can mutually serve one another.
- 1.1.8. Questions for Membership Candidates:
  - Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His wrath, and without hope apart from His sovereign mercy?
  - Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you trust in Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel, as priest, king, and prophet?
  - Do you now promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will strive to live a life of repentance and obedience, in a manner worthy of the followers of Christ?
  - Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
  - Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to pursue its purity and peace?
  - Do you promise to love all the other members of the Church, bearing their burdens and sharing their joy?

## **1.2. *Transfers from Other Congregations***

If those requesting membership in Walker's Chapel are presently members of another congregation, the Elders of Walker's Chapel will send a request of transfer to the leadership of that congregation. If no reply is made in thirty days, the Walker's Chapel Elders may receive the member based upon profession of faith. It is the desire of Walker's Chapel to respect the governmental actions of other churches as much as possible. If the prospective member has been under discipline, a full investigation is to be made.

## **1.3. *Records of Membership***

The Elders of Walker's Chapel is to keep careful records of membership, including baptisms, for the purpose of providing loving oversight of the congregation. The Elders should always keep the congregation informed of changes in Church membership.

#### **1.4. Release or Transfer of Membership**

- 1.4.1. If any member requests to be released to the care of another orthodox trinitarian Christian church, he should notify the Elders. The Elders will release him with a blessing, except as noted here. If any member requests a release while under church discipline, the Elders will delay acting on the request until the disciplinary matter is resolved. The matter can be resolved by acquittal, repentance, censure, or excommunication; or, if the Walker's Chapel Elders is reasonably confident the receiving church will continue the disciplinary process in a biblical manner, the member may be released into the pastoral care of that church, with a complete report of the matter passed along to the governance of that church.
- 1.4.2. If members move from our geographical area, they are charged to find a new church home within twelve months. This time may be reduced or extended at the Elders' discretion. After this time is expired, their names will be removed from the membership roll of Walker's Chapel.
- 1.4.3. Members of this church who willfully, without plausible reason or excuse, consistently absent themselves from Walker's Chapel for Lord's Day worship shall be subject to church discipline, as the Elders deems appropriate, for the purity of the church and the spiritual health of the absent member. If a member begins attending another church without transferring membership for longer than twelve months, he may have his name erased from the membership roll of Walker's Chapel. If a member refuses to attend another church or meet with the Elders for reconciliation, this will result in that member's excommunication and removal from the roll.

#### **1.5. Communicant Membership**

Under the headship of Christ, the responsibility for overseeing the administration of the sacraments remains with the elders. For families who espouse the "covenant family" understanding, all baptized children ought to participate in the Lord's Supper when they are physically able to do so (see Section 4.4.1). All baptized children are subject to the nurture and discipline of the Church, along with their parents. For those families who espouse the "believer's baptism" understanding, their children may participate in communion once they profess faith and are baptized per the direction of their head of their household.

#### **1.6. Electors, Elections, and Congregational Meetings**

Electors, age twenty and above, are considered "heads of households" in the Church. A "head of household" is defined regularly as the father of the family who represents his family in church government settings. Where no father is present, the mother of the family will serve as the head of household. Single members over the age of twenty and not associated directly with a family who are already members of the church will be considered heads of households as well. The Elders may revoke voting privileges as part of the disciplinary process. Voting will take place by electors in the election of Church offices, including pastors, elders, and deacons; if necessary, the dismissal of those same officers; the adopting or amending of the Constitution; leaving the CREC and making a new ecclesiastical affiliation; real property transactions, and on other matters the Elders may deem wise or necessary. The Elders must provide at least two weeks' notice before all congregational meetings. Votes should ordinarily be held in conjunction with a Lord's Day service to maximize attendance. At least three-fourths of the congregation's voting membership must be present as a quorum for a vote. A quorum may be determined by counting total valid ballots cast in person on the day of an election. A passing vote requires the affirmation of three-fourths of those voting, unless otherwise provided for in the Constitution.

## 2. OFFICERS AND ORDINATION

### 2.1. *Offices Defined*

- 2.1.1. Jesus Christ has appointed several offices for the edification and growth of His Church. The extraordinary offices of apostle and prophet have now ceased, as their foundation-laying role in redemptive history is complete (Eph. 2:20). Walker's Chapel's form of government includes and makes provision for the following ordinary and perpetual offices: teaching elder, ruling elder, and deacon. Teaching elder is an office of Word and Sacrament. Ruling elder is an office of spiritual oversight, service, and rule. The active teaching and ruling elders comprise the Elders of the local church. Deacon is an office of service and stewardship under the oversight of the Elders. Deacons are assistants to the elders, with a special calling to minister mercy, primarily among the family of God, and secondarily in the world, as well as performing other assorted tasks. The Elders combined with the Diaconate comprise the Consistory of the local church. The Consistory may also create additional non-authoritative orders of men and women within the congregation to provide service and give assistance to the officers in specific tasks of ministry.
- 2.1.2. The New Testament uses the term "elder" (or "presbyter") with great breadth to refer to both officers who minister in Word and Sacrament as well as ruling elders, who do not ordinarily preach, teach, or administer the Sacraments, but must, "be able, by sound doctrine, to exhort and convict those who contradict" (Titus 1:9). A distinction between elders who rule and elders who are also responsible for teaching and the Sacraments is made in Scripture (2 Chr. 19:8; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 5:17–18; 2 Tim. 3:17–4:2), with the latter linked to the Old Covenant priestly office as its New Covenant counterpart (1 Cor. 9:13). Hence, we officially distinguish ruling elders and those elders who are lawfully ordained to be elders laboring in the Word and doctrine as teaching elders. Teaching elders and ruling elders co-labor together in shepherding the flock as members of the same Elders (1 Pt. 5:2–4), but these various types of elders differ in respect to personal calling, gifts, function, and (strictly speaking) office.

### 2.2. *Officers in Relation to the Local Church*

- 2.2.1. While it is important for the Church always to have pastoral leadership, in the providence of God, we understand that the local Church may not fill all these offices at all times. Indeed, some positions may only be filled rarely.
- 2.2.2. It is lawful and proper that there be fixed congregations, that is, a certain company of Christians who meet in one assembly at a regular time and place for public worship, under the oversight of officers. When believers multiply to such a number that they cannot conveniently meet in one place, under one Elders, it is practical that they divide into distinct local congregations, for the better maintenance of worship and government, and for the fulfillment of their mutual duties to one another. The ordinary way of dividing Christians into distinct congregations, and most conducive to edification, is by the respective bounds of their dwellings (parishes). This is because those who dwell together, being bound to another as neighbors, generally have better opportunity to fulfill these obligations to one another. It is our desire to be a congregation that multiplies herself, as God prospers us.
- 2.2.3. There must be a plurality of elders serving in the congregation. If the number of elders serving on the Elders drops below two, the remaining officers must immediately contact the presbytery to request the appointment of a provisional Elders. The provisional Elders is to govern the congregation until a full Elders is installed and the provisional Elders deems that oversight is no longer necessary.

### **2.3. Selection and Calling of Officers**

- 2.3.1. The Elders of elders will examine any potential candidate for office with regard to his doctrine and manner of life. If he has any disagreement or reservation about any portion of the Church's doctrinal views as expressed in the Constitution (specifically this Book of Church Order and the confessional standards), then he must inform the Elders of it. The Elders will determine if such a scruple excludes the candidate from office.
- 2.3.2. Examples of common acceptable, though not mandatory, exceptions to our confessional standards include (but are not limited to):
  - Disagreement with the "covenant of works" language in WCF VII.2, whereas God's covenants are always gracious, and His favor even to Adam was not merited or earned by Adam's good works.
  - Disagreement with the rigorous application and understanding of the Sabbath in WCF XXI.8, and a scruple with the language about the necessity of abstaining from "thoughts about worldly employments and recreation" on the Lord's Day.
  - Disagreement with the way that WCF XXIV.6 speaks about divorce, realizing that there may be other righteous reasons beyond "adultery or . . . willful desertion" such as abuse, which may warrant divorce for the protection of the innocent.
  - Disagreement with the (pre-1789) WCF XXV.6 reference to the Pope as the antichrist.
  - Disagreement with the language in WLC 109 forbidding picturing the Lord Jesus "inwardly in our mind."
  - Officer candidates who subscribe to covenant baptism and covenant communion (i.e., the "covenant family" understanding) may take an exception to the language of WLC Q. 177 and WSC Q. 97 regarding the Lord's Supper being administered only to those with the ability to examine themselves.
- 2.3.3. No exception may be counted as acceptable which strikes at the vitals of the Christian faith as expressed in the ecumenical creeds. The Elders must inform the congregation of any exceptions taken by the potential candidate for office prior to the election of that candidate.
- 2.3.4. All candidates must meet the general qualifications for the office set down in Scripture (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:2-4). If an officer later changes his views on some matter that would require taking an exception to the Constitution, he should notify the appropriate church courts as soon as possible. Teaching elders should notify the Elders and presbytery; other officers should notify the Elders. The Elders must inform the congregation of any new exceptions taken by that officer as well as whether that exception is permitted by the Elders.
- 2.3.5. In the case of a teaching elder, the candidate should also be examined by presbytery as to his fitness for ministry in terms of both doctrine and life. Candidates for ministry of Word and Sacrament should ordinarily have some formal theological training under the oversight of a body of elders. They should also excel in knowledge of the Scriptures in their original languages, have proficiency in all areas of theology and Church history, and have gifts of preaching and/or teaching.
- 2.3.6. All the procedures of the CREC related to ministerial calling should be followed. The terms of a pastoral call, including compensation, vacation time, ministerial expenses, etc., shall be determined by the Elders when a call is issued, and then reviewed annually by the Elders. Because he labors in the gospel, a teaching elder shall ordinarily draw his living from the gospel, receiving support from the tithes and offerings of the congregation.

- 2.3.7. If a man is already ordained to the office for which he is a candidate at Walker's Chapel, his examination, by whatever Church court is involved, does not have to be comprehensive. His earlier ordination should be examined as to its validity, he should be interviewed with regard to his fitness for office and his calling, and he should be prepared to discuss his exceptions to the Walker's Chapel Constitution. The Elders must inform the congregation of any exceptions taken by this candidate prior to the election of that candidate.
- 2.3.8. Nominations to any Church office may be received from any elector at any time, provided that it is delivered to the pastor or Clerk of Elders. The Elders and Diaconate may also nominate candidates for office. Willing nominated individuals who are approved with the consent of the Elders will normally undergo some training, instruction, and examination, as the Elders desires and schedules. This will be carried out under the oversight of the pastor. The Elders, after the time of training, instruction, and examination is complete, may approve the nominee or not for election.
- 2.3.9. The election of persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon shall ordinarily be done in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Elders, electors of the congregation may submit names to the Elders, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. After the close of the nomination period nominees for the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the qualifications and the work of the office. Each nominee shall be examined in:
- his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9);
  - his knowledge of Bible content;
  - his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the constitution of Walker's Chapel and the book of procedures of the CREC;
  - the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
  - his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination (see Section 2.7 for elders and Section 2.8 for deacons).
- 2.3.10. If there are candidates eligible for the election, the Elders shall report to the congregation those eligible, giving at least thirty (30) days prior notice of the time and place of a congregational meeting for elections. The Elders must inform the congregation of any confessional exceptions taken by the officer candidate at that time.
- 2.3.11. If a candidate is not approved for office by the Elders, he may request from the Elders a list of deficiencies or areas of concern, stated in biblical terms, and a proposed course of action for remedying these concerns.
- 2.3.12. After a candidate is approved for election, the Elders will call a congregational meeting in order for the electors to cast their votes on the candidate by way of written ballot. The voting ballot will provide the candidate's name and the option of voting yes or no. Voters may abstain from the vote by not submitting a ballot. Blank, defaced, or illegible ballots will be discarded. If more than one candidate is up for election at the same congregational meeting, each candidate shall have his own ballot. In order to be elected, a candidate must be approved by at least three-fourths of the ballots cast. If the candidate is elected, the elders will ordain him through laying-on of hands and prayer at an appropriate time, according to specifications of the Walker's Chapel Constitution.
- 2.3.13. Once in office, the officer will serve for life, unless he resigns, is removed, is elected for another office, or is granted emeritus status in accordance with Section 3.7. Leaves of absence from service in these offices may be granted by the Elders. The length of the leave

of absence should be agreed upon by both the officer and the Elders. Even while on sabbatical, the officer holds his office, but he is not expected to carry the ordinary work load in the life of the Church. The status of Church officers should always be communicated to the congregation. If a leave of absence exceeds one year the individual must be re-nominated and re-elected following the standard process.

- 2.3.14. If an officer tenders his resignation, the Elders may receive the resignation but shall not act upon it until one month has passed. When the resignation is accepted by the Elders, the congregation must be notified of this action (see Section 3.5).

## **2.4. *The Elders and Diaconate: Organization, Procedures, and Responsibilities***

- 2.4.1. Under Christ, as the Head and King of the Church, the power of Church rule has been vested in the Elders, composed of all elders, including pastors and ruling elders in the local Church (2 Chron. 19:8). Ordinarily, the Church should be ruled by a plurality of qualified elders. The moderator of the Elders, responsible for calling and overseeing meetings, is the pastor. One member of the Elders shall serve as Clerk and be responsible for the Elders' communications to and from other churches, the presbytery, and the congregation. The Clerk is elected by the Elders to a two-year term, and may serve unlimited consecutive terms.
- 2.4.2. The Elders must meet at least quarterly. In meetings, the Clerk of Elders will record accurate minutes of the actions taken by the Elders. Minutes are to be submitted back to the whole Elders for approval. In all meetings of the Elders, each elder has one vote. In the Elders, decisions are made and motions enacted by simple majority vote.
- 2.4.3. The elders as a Elders are collectively responsible for ruling and shepherding (1 Pet. 5:1-2); equipping (Eph. 4:11-12); gathering the people for covenant renewal worship (Heb. 10:25); leading in times of prayer and fasting (Acts 6:4; 13:1-3); teaching and preaching (1 Tim. 5:17); determining and overseeing admission to the Sacraments, which are baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26); administering Church discipline and restoring offenders (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-5); counseling with members as needed (Prov. 11:14); and praying for the healing of the sick, including anointing with oil (Jas. 5:14-15). The Elders may also create and dissolve teams, committees, commissions, orders, and boards dedicated to particular areas of ministry in the life of the church. The Elders may also draft and approve position papers and resolutions that speak the mind of the church to particular issues. More specific duties of each office within the eldership are described below.
- 2.4.4. The elders in Elders are authorized to delegate responsibilities to the deacons, hire and fire church staff, define responsibilities for church staff, delegate responsibilities to the staff for subordinate ministries, approve the annual budget and expenditure policies, and organize various non-authoritative "orders" of church members for service and assistance. The Elders also commissions or licenses ministerial students and oversees the course of their training for the eldership. In all these ways, the elders act jointly, not severally.
- 2.4.5. All church-related concerns and complaints should be brought to the attention of the Elders. A member should present concerns that are grave in nature in writing to either the pastor or Clerk of Elders for consideration by the Elders. All members of the Church are welcome and invited to call upon the Elders (or any individual member thereof) for special counsel, for prayer, or for confession of sin and absolution.
- 2.4.6. The Elders is responsible for sending the senior pastor and one additional elder to all CREC presbytery and council meetings, in accord with the CREC constitution. The pastor

is a permanent delegate to all higher courts. A delegate in addition to the pastor may be chosen by a vote of the Elders. Delegates are to vote their conscience at higher assemblies, but should also consider the desires and will of the entire Walker's Chapel Elders.

- 2.4.7. The Diaconate is composed of the deacons. In the Diaconate, decisions are made and motions enacted by simple majority vote. The Diaconate should elect one current deacon to serve as chairman for a one-year term. The chairman is responsible for organizing the Diaconate, calling and overseeing meetings, keeping minutes (or appointing another to do so) from meetings, and serving as a liaison between the Diaconate and the Elders and the congregation. The Diaconate is also responsible for electing a treasurer to a one-year term to make necessary and accurate financial reports. The treasurer does not have to come from within the Diaconate, provided another member of the congregation is willing and able to serve in this capacity. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms chairmen and treasurers may serve. The Elders may replace a chairman or treasurer. The Diaconate must meet at least once per quarter.
- 2.4.8. Under the general oversight of the elders, the deacons manage the financial, physical, social, and benevolent functions of the Church (Acts 6:2-4). Such responsibilities include preparing and administering the annual budget to be approved by the Elders, building maintenance, fellowship meals, administrative support, mercy ministries, and distribution of the deacons' fund to those in need. The deacons may be divided into specialized orders if expedient.
- 2.4.9. A joint officer meeting of all elders and deacons together must be held at least once a year, under the oversight of the pastor/moderator.
- 2.4.10. The pastor shall serve as moderator of congregational meetings, though the Elders may choose to appoint another elder to be moderator in his place, if necessary. The Clerk of Elders is responsible for keeping minutes in joint officer and congregational meetings. In congregational meetings, the congregation should always be given ample time to ask questions and discuss matters, especially before a vote.

## **2.5. Ordination**

- 2.5.1. Ordination is a rite which includes the laying-on of hands and prayer to set a man apart to a particular office and function within the church. Insofar as ordination confers office in the church, with attendant privileges and responsibilities, it is an act of God, not merely the human officiants. Ordination is effective by the grace of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, in accord with biblical teaching. The practice of ordination is important to good order within the life of the church. With regard to ordination, we uphold the following principles.
- 2.5.2. No man ought to take upon himself any ecclesiastical office without a lawful calling. A man should only be ordained if he has a call to a particular work or service in a local body or mission field. Only qualified, examined, and elected men have been duly called to office, and only such are to be ordained.
- 2.5.3. Ordination is always to be continued in the church, but officers are only to be ordained into a particular office one time. If a man has already been ordained to office in another church, he is to be installed, rather than re-ordained.
- 2.5.4. Ordination is the solemn setting-apart of a person to some public church office. Ordination is a ritual of the church through which the Spirit confers all the privileges and obligations of the office to which the man has been called. A man is ordained into a particular office,

whether teaching elder, ruling elder, or deacon. No man should be ordained to the same office more than once, but if he is called and elected to a new office, he should be ordained into the new office.

- 2.5.5. Every officer is to be ordained by the imposition of hands and prayer by a body of elders. Elders from other faithful presbyteries and denominations are welcome to participate in the ordination services of Walker's Chapel since their offices are recognized and respected.
- 2.5.6. In the ordination of a man to an office of ministry in Word and Sacrament, it is most fitting to include fellow elders laboring in the Word and doctrine who minister at other congregations in the same presbytery. In this way, the Church shows its submission to and cooperation with the whole presbytery in calling the man to be ordained.
- 2.5.7. It is agreeable to the Word of God, and very expedient, that when officers are ordained or installed, that both the man and congregation should be charged in a fitting way to fulfill their responsibilities to one another.
- 2.5.8. Ordinations and installations should take place in a public assembly of the Church.
- 2.5.9. Ordinations should be followed by the right hand of fellowship in order to welcome the man into his new office.
- 2.5.10. Vows are not the essence of the ordination ritual. But vows made by both the officer-elect and the congregation are mutually edifying, as both parties promise to serve one another in their respective spheres, in mutual dependence upon the Lord's mercy.

## **2.6. *Vows for a Teaching Elder***

- 2.6.1. When a pastor (or other elder laboring in the Word and doctrine) is ordained, he and the congregation are to take the following vows. The vows and declaration are best administered by another pastor from the presbytery. The laying-on of hands and prayer are to be inserted between the vows of the man and the vows of the congregation.
- 2.6.2. Ordination and Installation Questions for the Pastor-Elect
  - Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
  - Do you sincerely receive and adopt the confessions and catechisms of this church, as being true to the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your presbytery and Elders the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?
  - Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of this church as being in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity?
  - Do you accept the office of pastor in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the church of which God has made you an officer?
  - Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
  - Have you been led, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His Son?
  - Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and

the purity and peace and unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise against you on that account?

- Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties and obligations as a Christian and a minister of the Gospel, whether personal or relational, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your manner of life, and to walk in a fashion worthy of imitation before the flock of which God shall make you overseer?
- Are you now willing to take charge of this church, agreeable to your declaration when accepting their call? And do you, relying upon God for strength, promise to fulfill in this congregation the duties of a pastor, not lording it over the people, but living among them as one who serves, as a representative and ambassador of Jesus Christ?

#### 2.6.3. Questions to the Congregation

- Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive
- [name of pastor] whom you have called to be your pastor?
- Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him as unto Christ in the due exercise of ministry and discipline?
- Do you promise to encourage him in his work, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification, as he labors to represent Christ to you?
- Do you engage to continue to him while he is your pastor that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and to furnish him with whatever you may see needful for the honor of religion and for his comfort among you?

2.6.4. Minister: I now pronounce and declare that [name of pastor] has been regularly elected, ordained, and installed as Pastor of this church, agreeable to the Word of God, and that as such he is entitled to all encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

2.6.5. People: Amen.

2.6.6. *Installation of an Ordained Pastor.* When a pastor (or other elder laboring in the Word and doctrine, already ordained) is installed, he is to take the following vows. (The congregation takes the same vows as at an ordination. The same declaration may be made as well, omitting the word “ordained.”)

#### 2.6.7. Questions to the Pastor:

- Are you now willing to take charge of this congregation as their pastor, agreeable to your declaration in accepting its call?
- Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that, in taking upon you this charge, you are driven by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of the church?
- Do you solemnly promise that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavor faithfully to fulfill all the duties of a pastor to this congregation, and will be careful to maintain a godly manner in all respects, as becoming a minister of the Gospel of Christ, agreeable to your ordination?
- Do you promise to uphold all the vows of your ordination, with regard to confessional subscription and ministerial integrity, doing all your duties in such a way that your labor serves the peace, purity, and edification of the church, to the glory of God?
- All vows may be modified as needed to accommodate men called to various ministries of Word and Sacrament, or the roles of assistant or associate pastor (Section 3.2.5).

## **2.7. Vows for a Ruling Elder**

When a ruling elder is ordained or installed, he and the congregation are to take the following vows. The laying on of hands and prayer (at an ordination service) are to be inserted between the vows of the man and the vows of the Congregation.

Ordination and Installation Questions for the Elder-Elect

- Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- Do you sincerely receive and adopt in good faith the confessions and catechisms, as being true to the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Elders the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?
- Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of this church, as in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity?
- Do you accept the office of elder in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the church of which God has made you an officer?
- Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
- Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the church?

Question for the Congregation: Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as elder, and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which this office, according to the Word of God and the constitution of this church, entitles him?

Minister: I now pronounce and declare that [name of elder] has been regularly elected and ordained, and installed as an elder in this church, agreeable to the Word of God, and that as such he is entitled to all encouragement, honor and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

People: Amen.

If the ruling elder is being installed rather than ordained, the same vows are to be used, though the word “ordained” may be omitted from the declaration.

## **2.8. Vows for a Deacon**

When a deacon is ordained or installed, he and the congregation are to take the following vows. The laying on of hands and prayer (at an ordination service) are to be inserted between the vows of the man and the vows of the congregation.

Ordination and Installation Questions for the Deacon-Elect:

- Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- Do you sincerely receive and adopt in good faith the confessions and the catechisms of this Church, as being true to the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to

your Elders the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?

- Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of this church, as in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity?
- Do you accept the office of deacon in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the church of which God has made you an officer?
- Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
- Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the church?

Question for the Congregation: Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as deacon, and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord to which this office, according to the Word of God and the Constitution of this church, entitles him?

Pastor: I now pronounce and declare that has been regularly elected, and ordained, and installed a deacon in this church, agreeable to the Word of God, and that as such he is entitled to all encouragement, honor and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

People: Amen.

If the deacon is being installed rather than ordained, the same vows are to be used, though the word “ordained” may be omitted from the declaration.

### **3. DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

#### **3.1. *New Covenant Officers in General***

As suggested above, the Church of Jesus Christ inherited a form of government from Old Covenant Israel. While this pattern has been transformed and adapted to the New Covenant situation, the precedents and principles of the Old Covenant system are still relevant and instructive as a model for church polity. The Church, as the New Israel, is to fulfill Israel’s calling in history through Christ. Analogies between Old Covenant and New Covenant positions look roughly like this:

Old Covenant prophets and priests are equivalent to New Covenant elders laboring in the Word and doctrine. Elders of the people/gate, judges, and kings/shepherds are equivalent to ruling elders. Levites and assistants/apprentices are equivalent to Deacons.

#### **3.2. *Ministers/Teaching Elder/Pastor, Ruling Elders, and Deacons***

- 3.2.1. The ministry of the priests, as well as apostles and prophets, is carried on in the work of the elders laboring in the Word and doctrine. However, these ministers do not claim prophetic or apostolic inspiration; instead they build upon the foundation that has already been laid once and for all in the apostolic era (Eph. 2:20). Elders laboring in the Word and doctrine fulfill the priestly role as the primary liturgical and sacramental officers of the church and the prophetic role as they declare and apply God’s Word to the congregation and the world and lead the people in intercessory prayer before the throne of grace. In their governing role, they work with the other elders.
- 3.2.2. Elders of the people, or ruling elders, are not, properly speaking, liturgical or teaching officers, but rather focus on overseeing the people the other six days outside of Lord’s Day

gathered worship. Their work is to build up and strengthen the community, providing wise oversight and direction. As “chief laymen” they are responsible for maintaining good order and justice in the community, acting as judges, peacekeepers, and counselors. Along with the teaching elders, they oversee the formal church discipline process.

- 3.2.3. Deacons have the most flexible job description, as the elders determine what they are to do in a given situation. They are to elders laboring in the Word and doctrine what Levites were to the priests; what Joshua was to Moses; what Elisha was to Elijah; what Gehazi was to Elisha; or what Baruch was to Jeremiah. They are assistants to elders, and may be apprentices-in-training, as well.
- 3.2.4. Deacons may function as specialists in almost any area of church life—mercy ministry, teaching, music, stewardship, administration, liturgical assistance. But the diaconal office is not one of authority or governance in the church. In general, they do those things that allow the elders to focus more directly on the ministries given to them as members of the church Elders. The Elders may direct the Diaconate or individual deacons to engage in other works as well, in accord with the nature of the office as described below.

### **3.3. *The Office of Pastor (or Minister)***

- 3.3.1. The pastor is an ordinary and perpetual officer in the Church (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). The pastorate is especially the New Covenant counterpart to the old covenant priesthood, even as each local congregation is a miniature fulfillment of the typology of the old covenant temple. The pastor is the primary servant-priest among and toward the royal priesthood of the whole congregation, with the goal of presenting the people in Christ as an acceptable offering to the Father, sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:16). In addition to the general duties described in Section 2.4, it especially belongs to the pastoral office
  - to pray for and with his flock, as the mouth of the people unto God; to pray publicly for the people, especially in gathered worship; to pray privately for and with the people, especially for the sick; and to pray for the lost;
  - to oversee the planning and leading of the Lord’s Day liturgy, as the priests of the Old Covenant led the people in worship at the tabernacle and temple;
  - to read, preach, and teach the Scriptures publicly, as the mouth of God to people, even as the priests in the Jewish Church were trusted with the public reading and exposition of the Word;
  - to study the Scriptures diligently, in order to feed the flock divine truth, as he preaches, teaches, convicts, reproves, exhorts, and comforts from the Word;
  - to train the people to live as a royal priesthood, offering Spiritual sacrifices in all of life, and especially in gathered worship;
  - to administer the Sacraments publicly, and privately in emergency situations, as the priests under the Law administered the sacrifices;
  - to declare absolution to the Lord’s repentant people, both publicly in gathered worship, and privately, after they have confessed their sins;
  - to bless the people from God, declaring a benediction, as the priests did under the Old Covenant;
  - to encourage husbands to be faithful in loving their wives as Christ loves the Church and fathers in raising their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord;
  - to encourage wives to respect their husbands and mothers to be diligent and faithful by caring for their families with joy and contentment;
  - to encourage the unmarried to pursue purity and service in accord with their vocations;
  - to encourage children to grow towards maturity in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ;
  - to take care of the poor, in conjunction with the other officers;

- to represent the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, in lovingly caring for and disciplining the flock in conjunction with the other elders;
  - to authorize and deputize the ruling elders and deacons in his absence to administer the Lord's Supper;
  - to lead the Elders as moderator and overseer;
  - to represent the local congregation as a permanent delegate to all higher assemblies of the Church; and
  - to serve as bishop, or superintendent, over a collection of local churches, if so called.
- 3.3.2. Should the church ever be without a pastor, it should strive to secure one without delay (Matt. 9:36). The elders should seek out suitable nominees as necessary and may appoint a pastor search committee from the congregation. The elders will examine a nominee with regard to his doctrine, manner of life, and confessional adherence. In addition to the qualifications for elder, pastoral candidates must meet the biblical criteria for shepherds (2 Sam. 12:1ff, Ps. 23, John 10:11-16, etc.). Following this process, the elders may approve the nominee as a candidate to be placed on a ballot. After a candidate is approved for election, the Elders will call a congregational meeting in order for the electors to cast their votes on the candidate by way of written ballot.
- 3.3.3. The voting ballot will provide the candidate's name and the option of voting yes or no. Voters may abstain from the vote by not submitting a ballot. Blank, defaced, or illegible ballots will be discarded. If more than one candidate is up for election at the same congregational meeting, each candidate shall have his own ballot. In order to be elected, a candidate must be approved by at least three-fourths of the ballots cast. If the candidate is elected, the elders will extend a provisional call to him to be pastor. His call to be pastor is finalized only after the CREC's presbytery duly approves him. Following CREC approval, he may be ordained (if necessary) and installed as pastor. (It is also lawful for the candidate to be examined by the presbytery before a vote of the congregation. In such cases, the congregation's call is not provisional.)
- 3.3.4. While Walker's Chapel encourages her pastor(s) toward a long-term view of the ministry, in the providence of God, changes in a pastor's call to a particular church arise for both righteous and sinful reasons. In cases involving moral failures requiring disciplinary proceedings, the disciplinary process for the removal of a pastor is the same as for other officers, as described below. For cases that do not involve moral failures or disciplinary proceedings (e.g., Acts 15:33-41, Rom. 5:22-33, 1 Cor. 16:5-12), the procedure for terminating the call of a pastor, thereby dismissing him from service at Walker's Chapel, is as follows. The pastor may submit his resignation in writing and in person to the Elders. The Elders is to receive his resignation but is not to act on it until the next regular, stated meeting or until at least one month has passed. If the Elders accepts his resignation, he is relieved of his pastoral call to Walker's Chapel.
- 3.3.5. As need and resources dictate, Walker's Chapel may call a man to serve as an assistant pastor or associate pastor. The assistant is to be called by the Elders and after examination by the Elders and presbytery, ordained and/or installed according to the principles of the Constitution. An assistant may attend Elders meetings, though he does not have a vote, and may not serve as a delegate to a higher court. He does have full power to minister in the Word and sacraments. An associate is called in the same manner as the pastor, requiring the election of the congregation by a three-fourths vote. He becomes a member of the Elders with full voting privileges and may be a delegate to a higher court. Job responsibilities for assistants and associates are to be determined by the Elders.

### **3.4. The Office of Ruling Elder**

- 3.4.1. As there were in Old Covenant Israel elders of the people joined with the priests and Levites in the government of the Jewish Church, so Christ has instituted governors in the New Covenant Church, commonly called ruling elders (2 Chron. 19:8; Rom. 12:8; 1 Cor. 12:28). These men are “elders of the gate,” called upon to oversee the social life of the community as “chief laymen.” They are to be wise and God-fearing men, fit for leadership. Ruling elders are especially gifted in governing, though they may have other gifts as well. Governing the Church as a ruling elder is a matter of serving and caring for the people, setting before them a godly example in vocational and familial life, counseling and encouraging them, and engaging in discipline as needed. Ruling elders should serve sacrificially without “lording over” those they have been called to shepherd (Matt. 20:25-28, Mark 10:42-45, 1 Pet. 5:1-4). It is imperative that ruling elders know the people of the congregation well and command their trust and respect.
- 3.4.2. Ruling elders differ from other elders (the elders who labor in the Word and doctrine) in that they are not subject to examinations from presbytery with regard to their call to office; they typically have daily vocations outside the church; and they usually do not receive remuneration from the church for their services. However, on the Elders, they rule jointly with the other elders and have the same formal authority. They may serve as representatives of the church in presbytery and council meetings. It especially belongs to the office of ruling elder
- to serve on the Elders, and thus rule the people;
  - to advise teaching elders in their special work and represent the congregation on the Elders;
  - to oversee the doctrine and practice of the flock;
  - to set an example of godliness in all things;
  - to act as peacekeepers and judges in cases of dispute;
  - to pray with and for the people, especially in time of illness, and to anoint the sick with oil when requested, along with the elders who labor in the Word and doctrine;
  - to counsel and nurture the members of the congregation towards godliness, encouraging and correcting them as needed;
  - to assist the pastor in leading the liturgy when needed or appropriate;
  - to assist in the distribution of the Lord’s Supper and the collection of tithes and offerings;
  - to execute church discipline when and as situations require it; and
  - to join with the deacons in caring for the poor and needy.
- 3.4.3. Ruling elders labor beside teaching elders in lovingly shepherding and discipling the people. In times of necessity or in the absence of an officer ordained to administer the Sacraments, ruling elders may administer.

### **3.5. The Office of Deacon**

- 3.5.1. The Scripture holds out deacons as distinct officers in the Church. Deacons are called to be assistants to the elders who labor in the Word and doctrine (Acts 6:1–6) just as the Levites were assistants to the priests; and also to act as assistants to the ruling elders, operating under their oversight and authority. Deacons can be gifted and used in a wide variety of ways in the life of the Church. Deacons serve in ways authorized by the elders, freeing the elders to focus on their more specialized tasks. Primarily, it belongs to the office of deacon
- to take special care in mercy ministries and in meeting the needs of the poor, the immigrant, the prisoner, the fatherless, and the widow, first within the household of

God, and second, in the world;

- to befriend the friendless, and care for those in distress, in times of illness, bereavement, or other adversity, after the example of the Lord Jesus Christ;
- to evangelize the lost;
- to encourage the congregation to follow their example of service;
- to disburse funds from the church treasury on behalf of the Elders;
- to assist in the distribution of the Lord's Supper and the collection of tithes and offerings;
- to assist in the church's liturgical feasts and fellowship meals;
- to make recommendations to the Elders about budget and property, as stewards of the church's resources and assistants to the elders;
- to care for and maintain the property of the Church; and
- to assist in all other duties as assigned by the Elders.
- While the office of deacon is not ordinarily one of administering Word and Sacrament, in times of necessity or in the absence of an officer ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament, deacons may administer.

3.5.2. As noted above (Sections 2.1.1 and 2.4.9), the deacons may also enlist the services of gifted men and women to assist them in their work.

### **3.6. Resignation or Removal from Church Office**

- 3.6.1. While Church offices are ordinarily perpetual, sometimes officers have their call terminated for providential or moral reasons. If an officer desires to take a leave of absence, he will present a letter to the Elders. The length of such a sabbatical should be agreed upon by the officer and the Elders. If the Elders approves, it will notify the church. If the Elders deems a leave of absence prudent for the well-being of the church or the officer, the length of the sabbatical should be mutually agreed upon.
- 3.6.2. If an officer desires to resign, he should present his resignation in writing to the Elders. The Elders is to receive the resignation but cannot act upon it until the next regularly-stated meeting or until at least one month has passed. If the resignation is sought for reasons of moral or doctrinal irregularity, then the resignation will not be a substitute for any appropriate Biblical discipline.
- 3.6.3. Members are urged to be extremely reluctant to bring charges against any officer, covering over offenses and overlooking shortcomings in a spirit of brotherly love, and remembering what the Bible says about those who bear false testimony and judge others (especially rulers) harshly. If two or three witnesses believe an elder or deacon to be morally or doctrinally unfit for office, then they may present charges to the Elders in writing and in person (1 Tim. 5:19). If the Elders (excluding the accused from voting, in such a case) decides that the question is worthy of an investigation and/or hearing before the Elders, at their discretion, they may inform the congregation of the charges, announce the date(s) of the scheduled investigation and/or hearing, and call witnesses to render testimony. If the charges are sustained by the other elders after trial, then the accused officer, depending on the gravity of the charges and his response to correction, may be rebuked by the Elders (1 Tim. 5:20), or may be removed from office (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), or both. If the charges prove to be slanderous, those who brought them may be subject to censure by the Elders.
- 3.6.4. In case an officer under discipline has charges against him sustained, his call to office may be involuntarily terminated by a vote of the Elders (excluding said officer, if he is an elder). In such a case of removal from office, the officer may appeal this judgment within four weeks of this action to the CREC courts for binding arbitration.

- 3.6.5. An officer may also be relieved of his office at any time if three-fourths of the congregation petitions the Elders to that effect. The officer may appeal the action of the congregation within thirty days of the action to the higher courts of the CREC, according to any provisions of the CREC Constitution, if he believes the congregation has acted without sufficient warrant.
- 3.6.6. An officer (elder or deacon) may also be removed from office if all the elders (other than an elder whose call to office is being challenged) agree to remove him from office. Again, he may appeal as described above. The Elders should always notify the congregation of changes in the status of an officer, as soon as reasonably possible.
- 3.6.7. When a deacon or ruling elder by reason of age or infirmity desires to be released from the active duties of the office, he may at his request and with the approval of the Elders be designated deacon or elder emeritus. When so designated, he is no longer required to perform the regular duties of his office, but may continue to perform certain of these duties on a voluntary basis, if requested by the Elders or a higher court. He may attend Diaconate or Elders meetings, if he so desires, and may participate fully in the discussion of any issues, but may not vote.

## **4. LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS**

### **4.1. *The Covenantal Form of Worship***

- 4.1.1. The Lord's Day (Sunday) worship service at Walker's Chapel seeks to follow the Bible's covenant renewal pattern of Calling, Confession/Cleansing, Consecration, Communion, and Commissioning. Covenant renewal service should include a call to worship, singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God, confession of sin and declaration of forgiveness, calling upon God's name in prayer, reading and exposition of the Scriptures, the collection of tithes and offerings, and a benediction. The celebration of the Lord's Supper with bread and wine will be observed quarterly at a minimum and may be observed weekly if the Elders deems this as edifying for the body.
- 4.1.2. The Elders may also schedule other services, especially in accord with the historic Christian calendar. While only Lord's Day services are considered "mandatory," members are strongly encouraged to participate in these other worship events, unless providentially hindered. Members are also encouraged to participate in other educational programs and social events in the life of the Church.

### **4.2. *The Nature of Baptism***

- 4.2.1. Baptism is a blessed sacrament of the New Covenant instituted by our Lord as a sign of salvation and initiation into His new humanity. The sacramental washing with water in the name of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – officially admits a person into the kingdom, temple, and covenant family of God. By the promise of the Word and the work of the Holy Spirit, baptism becomes an effectual means of salvation to believers. As a means of grace, baptism testifies of their identification with the Triune God of Scripture, union with Christ, regeneration, forgiveness of sin, consecration to walk in newness of life, and fellowship in the Body of Christ (Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 2:11-12; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-5; Titus 3:5; Mark 1:4). The one baptism of the New Covenant is the fulfillment of the many baptismal events and rituals of the Old Covenant, as well as circumcision, and anointing into office; hence, baptism is ordinarily not to be repeated.

- 4.2.2. Baptism, as a public instrument of union with Christ and His people, is ordinarily to be performed in the context of a Lord's Day covenant renewal service. However, a baptism's validity is in no way tied to its enactment at a certain time or in a certain place or by a certain person. Especially in cases of extremity or emergency, baptism may be performed outside of a regular worship service and by any baptized person (Acts 8:36-40). Ordinary requirements to perform baptism in an orderly fashion may be rescinded because the efficacy of the sacrament is not absolutely tied to its regular, public administration or to the office or piety of the one who administers; and the blessing of the sacrament is of more worth than good order in the life of the church. In cases of emergency baptisms, the Elders and congregation should be notified of the action as soon as possible.
- 4.2.3. While symbolic actions surrounding the rite of baptism and drawing attention to its meaning may be appropriate, the baptismal liturgy should be kept simple and unadorned with other actions. Washing with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit should not be encrusted with additional, extra-biblical rituals that would obscure or subvert the meaning of baptism itself.

### **4.3. *Recipients of Baptism***

- 4.3.1. According to the "covenant family" understanding of the New Covenant, baptism may be administered to the children of Christians in infancy, since to them no less than to adults are the promises of the kingdom. Every Covenantal administration in Scripture makes provision for the next generation; the ritual washings and baptismal types of the Old Covenant included children; Jesus declared that even the infants of His people participate in his covenant and kingdom and are believers; and the Apostles continued the practice of including children by baptizing households and regarding the children of Christians to be "in the Lord."
- 4.3.2. Thus, Christ and His redemptive benefits belong to disciples of all ages (Acts 2:39; Matt. 18:15-17; Eph. 6:4). That which is signified and conferred in baptism is applicable to infants promised to be in covenant, as well as to adults who profess faith in the God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
- 4.3.3. According to the "believer's baptism" understanding, the discontinuity between the Old and New Covenants suggests that only individuals with a conscious profession of faith in the Gospel be allowed the rite of water baptism. Because Walker's Chapel allows for both the "covenant family" and "believer's baptism" understandings of the New Covenant, heads of households may decide which of these views will govern the practice of their households in regard to baptism. Said heads of households should be able to articulate the Biblical reasons for their views to the Elders prior to the baptism(s) of their family members.
- 4.3.4. Baptismal candidates, whether children or adults, must ordinarily be approved by the Elders. Adults should confess their allegiance to Christ prior to baptism. Minor children in the households of Christians should be baptized on the basis of one or more parent's (or guardian's) Covenantal membership (Acts 16:31-34) and promise to disciple the child in the home (Gen. 18:19).
- 4.3.5. The Baptism of Infants/Children. When a child is baptized, the parent or parents are encouraged to make public vows. The congregation makes a vow in response to the baptism, receiving the child into the membership and nurture of the Church in the name of Christ. The parental vows are edifying, as a way of professing the parents' faith in the Covenantal promises, declaring what they hope and expect God to accomplish in the administration of the Sacrament, and demonstrating publicly why their child has a right to baptism. In the vows, the parents also profess faith on behalf of their child. The vows are a

public way of indicating why the child has a right to baptism.

4.3.6. Questions to the parents of children being baptized:

- Do you acknowledge your child's need of the cleansing blood of Jesus and the renewing Grace of the Holy Spirit?
- Do you claim God's covenant promises on his behalf, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for his salvation as you do your own?
- Do you now wholeheartedly commit this child to God and promise in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit that you will endeavor to set before him a godly example, that you will pray with and for him, that you will teach him the word of God, and that you will strive to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

4.3.7. Question to the congregation: Do you as a congregation receive this child as your brother/sister in Christ, and do you commit yourselves to assisting these parents in the Christian nurture of this child?

4.3.8. *The Baptism of Adults.* The person to be baptized shall stand before the minister and respond to these questions:

- Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord; and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life?
- Do you confess your need of the forgiveness of sins and with a humble and contrite heart put your whole trust in the mercy of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord?
- Do you renounce Satan and all his works; the vain pomp and false glory of the world, with all its covetous desires; and the sinful inclinations of the flesh, so that you will not follow, nor be led by them?
- Do you promise to continue in the peace and fellowship of the people of God, submitting yourself to the government and discipline of the Church and, with the aid of the Holy Spirit be Christ's faithful disciple all the days of your life?
- Do you desire to be baptized into this faith and be received into the body of Christ?

4.3.9. If the person wishes to join Walker's Chapel, then these questions are also to be asked:

- Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
- Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to pursue its purity and peace?

4.3.10. Question to the congregation: Do you receive this child of God as your brother/sister in Christ and commit yourself to their discipleship, to love them, to fellowship with them and to encourage them in their growth in the Christian faith?

#### **4.4. *The Eucharist (Lord's Supper, or Communion)***

- 4.4.1. The Eucharist is sacrament of the New Covenant instituted by our Lord as a sign of His redemptive work, and as a means of offering and giving Himself and His benefits to His people through the elements of bread and wine. By eating the bread and drinking the cup in a worthy manner, as one family, believers Spiritually feed upon Christ, renew their union and communion with Him, memorialize His death before the Father, and Spiritually commune with other covenant members (Luke 22:20; Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 1 Cor. 10:14-21). The Lord's Supper fulfills all the sacramental meals of the Old Covenant.

- 4.4.2. *Recipients of the Lord's Supper.* All members of the church in good standing are encouraged to partake of the Lord's Supper every time it is offered. Baptized children may partake as soon as they are physically able provided this understanding of Scripture agrees with the understanding of the head of their household.
- 4.4.3. Walker's Chapel practices "open communion." That is, we encourage all baptized Christians (in good standing, not excommunicated) to celebrate the Lord's Supper and so commune with Christ in His body. In principle, we confess that the Lord's Supper belongs to all of God's people, and invite all other Christians to join with us in celebrating the Lord's presence and gifts in and through bread and wine.
- 4.4.4. Under the headship of Christ, the responsibility for administering the communion elements is the responsibility of the Elders, including delegation of distributing the elements.
- 4.4.5. The Lord's Supper is ordinarily to be administered in the context of the whole local body on the Lord's Day. The Eucharist may also be administered in extraordinary circumstances by the pastor together with representatives of the Elders, deacons, or congregation, to the sick and to invalids, who are unable to attend worship on the Lord's Day.
- 4.4.6. For those who hold to the "covenant family" understanding, the sacramental meal of the New Covenant, should be administered to all baptized believers, even to young children. And, while we believe this act of covenantal inclusion is our duty, just as it was in the Old Covenant regarding Passover, we recognize that there are those who would wish to join in fellowship with us as members, whether by profession of faith or letter of transfer, who have not come to that same Biblical understanding regarding their children. Therefore, in the spirit of unity, peace and love, the Elders shall defer in this decision to the view of the head of the household, and the family shall submit to this as a loving accommodation and not tacit agreement with their position.

## **5. CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

### **5.1. *Informal and Formal Discipline***

- 5.1.1. One of the marks of a true Church of Jesus Christ is that it maintains discipline. Indeed, a biblical application of discipline is necessary to maintaining the boundary between the Church and the world. The purpose of church discipline is to prevent, restrain, or even to remove any evil that may threaten the Church, and to promote and encourage that which is good and glorifying to God. Church discipline, in all its forms—preventive, formative, corrective, and final—is essential to the ministry and mission of the Church, for without it the saints are not properly edified and protected, and those outside the Church are led to mock the gospel and the hypocrisy of God's people. All Walker's Chapel members are encouraged to love one another as they love themselves. By God's grace, disciplinary procedures will rarely be necessary, as we seek to live together in a community of rich, deep fellowship and friendship, continually encouraging one another in faithfulness and holiness. We must also remember that our Savior warned against the dangers of judging one another without mercy and called upon us to forgive as we desire to be forgiven.
- 5.1.2. We must let love cover a multitude of sins. However, love also requires confronting sin at times, and when those occasions arise, it is critical that matters be handled in a peaceful, wise, humble, and gracious manner. Only he who is Spiritual should seek to correct a brother in sin. He should do so in gentleness, knowing that he is capable of falling himself. We must first remove the beams from our own eyes. While this Constitution seeks to provide a set of procedures and guidelines for dealing with disciplinary situations, the chief

concern of all involved should never simply be doing things according to the proper form, but acting towards one another in love, in a manner most likely to turn the straying one back to the right path. God delights more in love among than the brethren and the exercise of mercy than technically-correct procedures carried out in a cold hearted fashion. We desire to be fully biblical in both our procedures and relationships, of course.

- 5.1.3. The ordinary course of discipline is informal, where members speak the truth in love, holding one another accountable to live according to Christ's commandments and to stir one another to charity and good works (Heb. 10:19-25). Members are urged to overlook the failings of others in love (1 Pet. 4:8), and to stir up other members of the body to charity and good works (Heb. 10:19-25). Most church discipline should be members lovingly and winsomely holding one another accountable to live according to the rule of Christ. Without becoming busybodies, as Paul warns, members should oversee one another in relationally appropriate ways.
- 5.1.4. Formal church discipline is applied through the official action and judgment of the Elders. All members should be aware that membership in Walker's Chapel makes one a proper object of church discipline as the Scriptures and membership vows require (see, for example of the latter, Section 1.1). Church members are children of the heavenly Father, and sometimes His chastening comes through the instrumentality of the Church (Heb. 12:3-11). Except in cases of scandal requiring immediate action, the pattern of church discipline will generally include private informal confrontation, private formal admonishment by two or three witnesses (Matt. 18:16), formal public admonishment (Matt. 18:17), and a formal hearing which may result in excommunication (Matt. 18:17). Excommunication should ordinarily be a public act of the church.
- 5.1.5. Private sins are those sins which are known only to God and perhaps a few others. Ordinarily these are handled according to Matthew 18:15-20, among those who have knowledge of the sin, and the sin should not be made public unless the situation escalates through a lack of repentance.
- 5.1.6. Public sins are those sins which are notorious or widely known, thus making a public response on the part of the church necessary and proper. Public sins ordinarily call for public censure and/or public confession, as the Elders sees fit, even if the offender is repentant. The Elders should always prayerfully consider the various ramifications of such censure or confession, aiming at the glory of God and the good of the Body as a whole.

## **5.2. Procedure of Formal Trials**

- 5.2.1. The following procedure will be followed in cases that require formal trials. To institute a trial, the process must be commenced by an individual or by the Elders. Ordinarily, the process should not be commenced unless Matthew 18 has been followed, unless the offense is public or the accused is unavailable or unwilling to engage in the Matthew 18 process.
  - *Charges:* The process is commenced by the filing of written charges with the Elders. These charges must clearly state with specificity the alleged sins and offenses of the accused. The charges must include the names and addresses of witnesses and identify any supporting documentation or evidence. It is the prerogative of the Elders to draft any final charges and to determine whether a trial will be held on charges filed. Individuals seeking to institute process against another are to be reminded by the Elders that they may themselves be subject to discipline if their charges are frivolous or ill-founded

- *Record of the case:* The Elders shall create a full record of the case, including written charges, citations, minutes, other documentation considered by the court, and transcripts of sworn testimony. In all cases, the charges will be formally declared to be filed by the Elders of Walker's Chapel acting as a court in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- *Representation:* If process is commenced, the Elders shall appoint a prosecutor to prosecute the charges. The accused may represent himself or may be represented by a member of Walker's Chapel. No outside attorney may be hired by any party. The members of the Elders shall act as judges, unless the member is a prosecutor or defends the accused.
- *Formal charges:* If the Elders decides to proceed to trial on the charges, the accused shall be provided a written copy of the charges with the names and addresses of the witnesses along with supporting documentation or evidence. The accused must provide to the Elders a written response to the charges within ten (10) days of receipt of same, or he may appear personally before the Elders to enter his response if he so requests and the Elders agrees to the request. If the accused fails to respond timely to the charges, he may be disciplined for contumacy.
- *Notice of trial:* If the Elders determines a trial is in order after receiving the response of the accused, the accused shall be provided at least twenty (20) days advance written notice of same. The trial should be scheduled at a reasonable time and location for all concerned parties to attend.
- *Witnesses:* The prosecutor and the accused must provide the Elders with the names and addresses of any witnesses they wish to cite to appear at trial. This request must be in writing and be provided to the Elders within ten (10) days of the date of trial. The Elders is to promptly send written citations by regular mail to the listed witnesses. Each party shall be responsible for securing the presence of his witnesses. Any member of Walker's Chapel (including officers) cited as a witness who fails to appear without good cause may be subject to discipline by the Elders in a separate proceeding. Any officer or member of Walker's Chapel who refuses to testify in a trial may be disciplined for contumacy.
- When the trial is about to proceed, the Moderator of the Elders shall enjoin the members of the Elders to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ and the solemn duty in which they are about to engage.
- Each witness will be required to affirmatively submit to the following oath or affirmation: "Do you solemnly promise in the presence of God that you will declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, according to the best of your knowledge in the matter in which you are called as a witness, as you shall answer to the great Judge of the living and the dead?"
- The competency of all witnesses shall be assumed, unless challenged. The Elders shall determine the competency and credibility of each witness. A husband or wife shall not be compelled to bear testimony against one another.
- *Evidence:* The testimony of more than one witness shall be required to sustain any charge. If there is only one witness, other sufficient corroborative evidence may be produced to substantiate the charge and functionally acts as the second witness against the accused.

- *Testimony:* Witnesses may be excluded from hearing the testimony of one another if either party requests. The accused, his representative (if any), and the prosecutor may not be excluded from hearing any testimony. The witnesses shall be examined in the presence of the parties. Each witness may be cross-examined by both parties. Questions must be pertinent and relevant, and the Elders determines same.
- *Judgment of the case:* On any questions arising in the process of a trial, the discussion shall first involve the parties. When they have been heard, they may be required to withdraw while the Elders deliberates upon and decides the issue.
- Any judge may recuse himself for good cause. Either party may, for cause, challenge the right of any member of the Elders to sit in the trial of the case, and the issue shall be decided by the other members of the Elders.
- *Order of trial:* The following order of trial shall be observed.
  - The Moderator shall charge the court.
  - The witnesses for the prosecution shall be examined.
  - The witnesses for the accused shall be examined.
  - The parties shall be heard: first the prosecutor and then the accused. The prosecutor shall close.
  - Members of the Elders may express their opinion in the case, and they may privately retire to deliberate upon the case.
  - The vote shall be taken, the verdict announced, and the judgment entered in the record.
- The Elders shall determine the extent to which (if any) the results of the trial are communicated to the congregation of Walker's Chapel.
- *Appeals:* Any accused may appeal his conviction by filing a written appeal to the Elders and to the next highest court in the CREC within one month of his receipt of notice of his conviction. The appeal must be timely filed using certified mail, return receipt requested. The appeal is timely filed if it is mailed on last day to appeal. Untimely appeals shall not be considered. The Elders shall provide the higher court and the accused one copy each of the record of the case.

### **5.3. *Restoration of Those Excommunicated***

- 5.3.1. The excommunicated party will be restored to the church when, in the evaluation of the Elders, the one under discipline has repented. A confession of this repentance will be read to the congregation on the Lord's Day, and the elders shall joyfully and formally announce the restoration of fellowship.
- 5.3.2. In all matters of discipline, members of Walker's Chapel are urged to remember the purposes of such discipline: the glory of God, whose honor is tarnished when the people who hear His name live scandalously; the restoration of the offender; and the prevention of similar transgressions on the part of other Christians.

### **5.4. *Subjects of Discipline***

- 5.4.1. Any communicant member may be disciplined by the church. Non-member communicant Christians who attend church regularly are subject to pastoral admonition, but not to formal excommunication (should the need for formal discipline arise, the Elders will

contact the leadership of the church of which the individual is a member). Nevertheless, an attending non-member who is divisive, heretical, scandalous, or factious may be barred from the Lord's Table and rejected after proper admonition. If another church has disciplined one of its members, and that person subsequently comes to Walker's Chapel desiring to join, then the Elders will honor the discipline of the other church, unless after due consultation with the person concerned and after all appropriate information is considered, the Elders rejects or reverses such disciplinary action as out of accord with the government of Christ and the teaching of the Scriptures.

## **5.5. Appeals**

- 5.5.1. Members of Walker's Chapel may appeal the actions of the Elders to the presbytery and/or council of the CREC within one month of such action and in accord with any provisions of the CREC Constitution.

## **6. DISSOLUTION**

- 6.1. Walker's Chapel may be dissolved by the unanimous vote of the Elders and two-thirds of the congregation. In the event of dissolution, all of the church's debts shall be fully paid and any remaining assets and holdings designated by the Elders may be transferred to other such churches as are in general agreement with Walker's Chapel's doctrinal outlook.
- 6.2. Upon the dissolution of this organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

## **7. REVISING AND AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION**

- 7.1. We recognize that while God has given to His Church, through His Word, a plan of government, that form does not cover all necessary details. Thus, many aspects of this Constitution do not presume to be Biblically-mandated but only consistent with Biblical principles, guided by sanctified common sense and a desire to do all things prudently, decently, and in order. Thus, we recognize the limitations of this Constitution and its subordination to the higher standard of Scripture. We also recognize that the practice of Christian faithfulness and charity is the best way to compensate for constitutional and procedural deficiencies. The character of office-holders and members is vastly more important to the health of the Church than the details of the form of government.
- 7.2. The Constitution of Walker's Chapel may be revised or amended at any time with the consent of a majority of the Elders and the approval of two-thirds of the congregation. Such votes require one month's notice. The reasons for the proposed changes should be clearly explained to the congregation. The congregation should be given ample time to discuss the issue publicly in a congregational meeting prior to the vote.
- 7.3. As we confess that this Constitution is a fallible work of fallible men, it may be set aside without the process of amendment by the judgment of the Elders, if obedience to Scripture is found to require it. Under such circumstances, the congregation will be informed, and a congregational meeting shall be held with two weeks' notice for the purpose of voting to ratify or disapprove of the Elders' action. The Elders' action may be ratified by a majority vote of the congregation.

## 8. BYLAWS

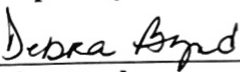
### 8.1. Marriage and Sexuality

- 8.1.1. We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive, covenantal union, as delineated in Scripture.
- 8.1.2. 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 between a man and a woman.
- 8.1.3. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexual conduct, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, any use of pornography or any attempt to change one’s sex, or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.
- 8.1.4. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
- 8.1.5. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the church.
- 8.1.6. Supporting Scriptures: Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:18-25; Exodus 20:14; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4).

## 9. ADDENDUM: THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- 9.1. Whereas Walker's Chapel began in the context of a group of members from Walker's United Methodist Church disaffiliating from the United Methodist Church and hiring Jeremiah Pent as their pastor to found a new church, Walker's Chapel will maintain the Board of Trustees inherited from the previous church until December 31, 2026. These trustees are Debra Byrd, Joyce Garrison, and Steve Utz. If any of these trustees resigns their position prior to the termination date, the position will not be refilled. It is understood that each of the Trustees will join as members of Walker's Chapel once such opportunity is extended to the congregation. Trustees who choose not to join as members will resign their position as Trustee.
- 9.2. The Trustees must be active members in good standing of Walker's Chapel. They shall be removed from the board if their membership at Walker's Chapel becomes inactive for any reason.
- 9.3. The Board of Trustees will serve as the corporate board of directors for Walker's Chapel under Virginia law until the church has installed a minimum of three Elders, which have been confirmed by a vote of the congregation. At that point, the Elders will begin serving as the corporate board of directors for Walker's Chapel.
- 9.4. The Trustees shall reserve \$200,000 of the funds they control as of December 5, 2024, for any needed maintenance/improvements on existing systems and structures. These will be considered "Trustees Funds." Any funds in excess of the reserved \$200,000 will be allocated to church operations and placed under the management of the Pastor and Elders. These will be considered "Operations Funds." If Walker's Chapel is still operating as a church on June 30, 2025, the Trustees will release \$100,000, or half of the remaining Trustees Funds, to the Elders for their management under the Operations Funds.
- 9.5. If Walker's Chapel is still operating as a church on December 31, 2026, the Trustees will release the remaining Trustees Funds under their control to the Elders for their management as Operations Funds. At this time, the Board of Trustees will be disbanded unless the Elders direct otherwise. This addendum to the Constitution in reference to the Trustees will then be removed from the Constitution without any need for a vote from the congregation, unless otherwise directed by the Elders at that time.
- 9.6. If Walker's Chapel ceases to operate as a church prior to December 31, 2026, all reserved funds controlled by the Trustees will remain with the Trustees, who will be free to begin a new church with said funds.
- 9.7. The Board of Trustees will be responsible for authorizing and funding all necessary maintenance and improvement expenditures on existing systems and structures from the Trustees Funds until the end of their term. Prior to the installation of three or more Elders, the Trustees will also authorize any operational expenses over \$10,000.
- 9.8. The Elders will be responsible for all operational expenditures from the Operations Funds, including payments for pastor salary, musicians, utilities, supplies, cleaning, weekly bulletins, etc. All contributions to the church will go into the Operations Funds account unless otherwise directed by the Elders.

Adopted by Walker's Chapel Board of Directors on January 9, 2025.

  
Debra Byrd

  
Joyce Garrison

  
Stephen Utz

## BOOK OF CONFESSIONS

Walker's Chapel accepts the following list of creeds, confessions, and catechisms as, in general, representing and summarizing our own doctrinal commitments. We take these documents as historic, authentic, and reliable summaries of what Scripture teaches.

### ***The Ecumenical Creeds***

The ecumenical creeds of the early Church have always served as the doctrinal boundaries of orthodoxy and serve as the foundation of all our doctrinal commitments. Thus, these are the most authoritative and un-revisable of all ecclesiastical documents.

- The Apostles Creed (ca. 200)
- The Nicene Creed (325; revised, 381)
- Definition of Chalcedon (451)

### ***The Reformational Confessions and Catechisms***

- The Three Forms of Unity
  - The Belgic Confession (1561)
  - The Heidelberg Catechism (1563)
  - The Canons of Dort (1619)
- The Westminster Standards (including the Confession of Faith and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms; American revision (1789))
- The London Baptist Confession (1689)

We believe that the Three Forms of Unity and Westminster Standards are among the clearest and most definitive statements of biblical doctrine yet produced by the Church. In addition, the London Baptist Confession helps articulate the “believer’s baptism” view allowed by our body. We have committed to using these confessions and catechisms as our basic doctrinal standards for officers. Walker’s Chapel members do not have to subscribe to these standards; the membership vows (or the Apostles Creed or the Nicene Creed) are sufficient to constitute a profession of orthodox faith.

However, as a Reformed church, our officers are expected to subscribe to a Reformed confession. Thus, candidates for office at Walker’s Chapel should make a detailed study of the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards and/or the London Baptist Confession. When candidates are entered into office at Walker’s Chapel, they must state exceptions to these standards for evaluation. The elders examining the candidate will determine if the exceptions are acceptable.

Of course, some exceptions to these standards have already been incorporated into the Walker’s Chapel Constitution and are therefore already judged as acceptable implicitly. All cases of doctrinal dispute with an officer should be tried against these standards, taking into account the officer’s approved exceptions.