

Trinity Community Church

CONSTITUTION

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ARTICLE I

NAME

Trinity Community Church of Bowie, Maryland

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

We as a holy people exist to worship God, to love our neighbor, and to facilitate the growth of the body spiritually, interpersonally and numerically both here and abroad.

Trinity Community Church of Bowie is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational and scientific purposes, including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section to any future federal tax code.

No part of the net earnings of Trinity Community Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that Trinity Community Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distribution in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof. No substantial part of the activities of Trinity Community Church shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and Trinity Community Church shall not participate in nor intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, Trinity Community Church shall not carry on any other activities that are not permitted to be carried on a.) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or b.) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Upon the dissolution of Trinity Community Church, 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. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of Trinity Community Church is then located, and shall be distributed exclusively for such purposes, or to such organizations as said Court shall determine which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

ARTICLE III

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

1. We believe there is one God who subsists in three persons. Each of the three is co-equal and co-eternal and has revealed themselves in the Bible. Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:16-17
2. We believe that the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God as it was given in its original manuscripts. II Timothy 3:16
3. We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the incarnation of the second person of the Godhead; that He is the infinite God-Man having been miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, and born of the Virgin Mary. John 1:1, 2, 14; Luke 1:4, 35
4. We believe that Jesus lived sinlessly upon the earth and became the perfect sacrifice on behalf of sinful mankind when He died physically on the cross. Thus, He satisfied the judgment of God, acquitting all people who exercise faith in the person and work of Christ. I Corinthians 15:3-5; I Peter 2:24, 25; Romans 3:23-25
5. We believe that Jesus was buried physically and on the third day rose again physically (though in a glorified form). In so doing the Father demonstrated the effectiveness of his payment for sin and imparted resurrection life to all who have faith in who Christ is and what He had done. I Corinthians 15:4-11; Ephesians 1:19-21
6. We believe that Jesus physically ascended back to the Father, the first person of the Godhead, and sent the Holy Spirit to indwell believers. At the right hand of the Father, Jesus makes intercession, defends, and prepares a place for His people. Acts 1:9; John 14:1, 2; I John 2:1, 2
7. We believe in the physical return of Jesus Christ to receive His people unto Himself, and to judge the world. Acts 1:11; John 14:3; Revelation 20:11-16; Matthew 25:31-46

ARTICLE IV

ACCOUNTABILITY

The local church provides a believer with the best arena for participating in God's plan in cooperation with other believers. The local church also serves as the strongest source of accountability for believers to encourage their ongoing growth in Christ. It is our conviction that believers, therefore, should identify themselves with a local church. As people seek to identify with Trinity Community Church, it is our desire to facilitate their growth and service. To ensure the long-term health of the corporate body and of the individual believers, Trinity Community Church will encourage all that attend:

1. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal salvation and abundant life
2. To publicly express their personal faith through water baptism
3. To consistently worship with the people of Trinity Community Church
4. To understand and agree with the doctrinal statement of Trinity Community Church
5. To determine their place in a ministry
6. To formally express a desire for accountability with regard to Christian life from the congregation and the Elders.

ARTICLE V

DISCIPLINE

A believer may be disciplined when the following is true:

1. The believer adopts and refuses to change a behavior or lifestyle which in the judgment of two witnesses (believers) and the Elders is in defiance of Biblical truth. The process for discipline in such cases will follow Matthew 18.
2. Only those who have formally requested accountability from the congregation and the Elders will gain the benefit of public accountability in the discipline process. (Further explanation may be found in the Elder policy.)

ARTICLE VI

GOVERNMENT

Trinity Community Church of Bowie is governed representatively by Elders. When Jesus Christ walked on earth, He was the example of direction for the church. Upon His ascension, His leadership was entrusted to the Apostles through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. During the lifetime of the Apostles, they prepared for their departure by entrusting the leadership of the church to the local Elders. The Scriptures teach that the Elders are to lead the local congregation in submission to Christ, the Head, and through the power of the Holy Spirit. They are to model the character of Christ in their personal, family, and public life. They are responsible for the instruction, protection, oversight and direction of the local congregation. This leadership does not happen in a social vacuum (i.e. out of touch with the real needs of the congregation), nor are the Elders to use their God-given authority for selfish purposes. The Elders will seek to ensure the spiritual health, interpersonal strength, and numerical growth of the congregation through various forms of communication and through a scriptural model of servant leadership.

Section One – Offices of the Church

A. Elder

1. Qualifications

A man who is in agreement with 1-6 of Article 4

I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-8 require the Elder (i.e. “overseer”) to be a man of godly character in his private, family, and public/church life

In addition, an Elder must demonstrate competence and accuracy in communicating Biblical truth, exhibiting an ability to lead in ministry

Each of the Elder candidates must have completed some level of systemized Biblical training. Preferably, this will be gained through Trinity Community Church’s internal leadership development, however, alternative training will be evaluated by existing Elders

2. Functional Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of an Elder is to provide spiritual direction and pastoral care to the corporate body of Trinity Community Church. The Elders will give direct accountability to the Senior Pastor(s) of Trinity Community Church, who will in turn lead the programs of the ministry and the other salaried staff.

A Chairman of the Elders shall be elected annually and unanimously by the Elders. The Chairman of the Elders shall not be the Senior Pastor.

When selecting an Elder or Deacon, the Elders must be unanimous in their decisions.

Each of the appointed Elders must be informed of all of the Elder meeting with reasonable opportunity for attendance.

Elder decisions will be determined by a 2/3 (two-thirds) majority vote of the Elders present for a meeting or by a simple majority of all the Elders, whichever is greater. A quorum of Elders shall consist of a simple majority.

3. Terms of Service

Elders do not have a specific term of service. Annual evaluations will ensure accountability and encourage quality. An Elder’s term will end when

He resigns voluntarily

He is removed (i.e. as an act of discipline for scandalous behavior or unrepentant sin recognized by at least two witnesses and the remaining Elders)

He becomes physically or psychologically unable to carry on his responsibilities as determined by the remaining Elders

B. Deacon

1. Qualifications

I Timothy 3:8-11 requires a Deacon to be a man of exemplary Christian character in his private, family, and public/church life. A Deacon need not be a teacher of the Bible.

2. Functional Responsibilities

Deacons are primarily responsible for managing the corporate property and financial business of Trinity Community Church. They are responsible for the management of the finite resources of Trinity Community Church under the accountability of the Elders. (Guidelines for Deacon decision-making are described in the Elder/Deacon operating policy.)

A Chairman of the Deacons will be elected annually and unanimously by the Deacons. The chairman is responsible for the effective mobilization of the remaining Deacons to carry out their responsibility.

3. Terms of Service

Deacons do not have a specific term of service. Annual evaluations will ensure accountability and encourage quality. A Deacon's term will end when

He resigns voluntarily

He is removed (i.e. as an act of discipline for scandalous behavior or unrepentant sin recognized by at least two witnesses and the Elders)

He becomes physically or psychologically unable to carry on his responsibilities as determined by the Elders

C. State Offices

1. Qualifications

The office of the President and the Office of the Secretary must be filled by the Elders. The Office of the Treasurer must be filled by either an Elder or a Deacon.

2. Functional Responsibilities

The President of the Corporation is responsible for executing the programs of managing the staff of the church. This person will usually be a Senior Pastor.

The Secretary will record all minutes of official board meetings and is the official signatory of the church on corporate documents.

The Treasurer will oversee the collecting, counting, recording, depositing, and dispersing of all monies. He will not count monies alone. He will not disperse

funds without the signature from the person authorized over a specific account. A Treasurer may not have signatory authority over any account. (Additional guidelines for financial accountability, should they be needed, will be described in the Elder policy statement.) There will be an annual financial review by either an internal or external auditor.

3. Terms of Service

Terms of service for a State Officer will comply with that of a Deacon as described in Article VI, Section One, B. 3.

Section Two – The appointment of Officers

A candidate for the office of Elder or Deacon must be nominated by the Elders. The name of a candidate will be announced to the congregation for four consecutive Sundays. During this time, members of the congregation are encouraged to interview and scripturally scrutinize the candidate. If any potential disqualifications are known or discovered, they are to be reported to an Elder(s) in person. The Elders will examine any stated concerns before rendering a decision about an Elder or Deacon candidate. At the end of the Thirty-day review, the Elders will announce their decision regarding the appointment of the candidate.

State officers will be elected by a unanimous vote of the Elders.

Section Three – The Hiring of Paid Staff

A Senior Pastor will be selected by the Elders after not less than three public hearings, to which all participants of Trinity Community Church will be requested to attend. A candidate to fill the office of a Senior Pastor will be scrutinized by the congregation for six weeks, during which time concerns should be addressed to an Elder(s). At the end of the scrutiny, the Elders will announce their decision regarding the office of a Senior Pastor. Their decision must show respect for the concerns and needs of the congregation. A Senior Pastor will serve as an Elder upon his appointment to the office of Senior Pastor, and as such must meet all the qualifications of an Elder.

All other paid staff will be hired by recommendation of the Senior Pastor(s) and by approval of the Elders, following a one-month period of scrutiny by the congregation and the subsequent relay of concerns to the Elder(s). No paid staff other than a Senior Pastor will serve as an Elder.

Section Four – Terms of Service and Dismissal of Paid Staff

The criteria for terms of service and dismissal of Paid Staff comply with that of a Deacon as described in Article VI, Section One, B.3.

In addition, paid staff may be dismissed for the failure to perform the responsibilities as described in the job description or upon the dissolving of the position by the Elders.

Upon the recommendation of a Senior Pastor, the Elders may dismiss any paid staff member for the fore-mentioned reasons. Likewise, the Elders may also dismiss a Senior Pastor for any of the reasons listed above. All paid staff shall be granted a thirty day severance with pay from the date of termination in every exit scenario except dismissal for cause. In cases of involuntary termination due to scandalous behavior, Trinity Community Church is under no obligation to offer severance.

ARTICLE VII

DESCRIPTION OF MEETINGS

Trinity Community Church shall have meetings for worship and for business

1. At least once a week the people of Trinity will gather for the purpose of worshipping God.
2. On an as-needed basis, Trinity shall hold a “public hearing” to gain information and insight from the congregation. Agendas for all such “public hearings” (i.e. business meetings) will be published two Sundays in advance of the scheduled meeting. An appointed moderator will maintain an environment for the exchange of information. A public hearing may be initiated by the approval of a majority of a quorum of Elders at an official Elders’ meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

The constitution may be amended upon the satisfaction of the following criteria:

1. An official “public hearing” must be held for the Trinity Community Church congregation for discussion on the proposed amendment.
2. The Elders must have a unanimous vote in favor of the amendment by all the Elders.

ARTICLE IX

DISSOLUTION

If, in the sovereignty of God, Trinity Community Church of Bowie, Maryland should dissolve, all debts should be first satisfied, and then all remaining assets shall go to Grace Bible Church of Seabrook, MD.