

**Christ Our Redeemer**  
**Community Church**  
Roanoke, Virginia  
Amended and Restated January 17, 2016<sup>1</sup>

## I THE CONSTITUTION OF CHRIST OUR REDEEMER COMMUNITY CHURCH

### ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of this Church shall be "**Christ Our Redeemer Community Church**", which shall be referred to throughout this document as "Church".

### ARTICLE 2: PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church shall be to glorify God and enjoy Him together by calling people to follow Jesus and walk together in the new life that He gives.

### ARTICLE 3: THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

This Church is a community of faith, a people who believe that the words of Jesus to "Come, follow me" are still the central and primary call on our lives. We want to bow to Jesus not merely to believe in Him; to be committed to His mission, not merely converted to going to church. We want to respond to this call of Jesus, to follow Him, and be His hands, heart, and feet right here, in the Roanoke Valley.

We want to live out our faith in meaningful community here, not separating ourselves from others, but forming genuine relationships with others who are serving this community in Jesus' name. We seek to live responsibly with our neighbors and our world. We are Christians, anchored firmly in the central orthodoxy that sets Christians apart from other world religions and has stood the tests of time and inquiry and criticism. We confess the summaries of faith as set forth in the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed. We are Christians within the worldwide Christian Church who embraces certain core convictions about the gospel, "the good news", which makes us evangelical in the historical sense of that word. We call these 'primary' theological stances because we believe they are central to the Christian life and crucial to message and mission of Jesus:

**1. "*In the beginning God...*" (Gen. 1:1)**

We believe in one God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit who is sovereign and gracious in all aspects of creation, providence, redemption, revelation and judgment.

**2. "*So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*" (Gen 1:27)**

*"We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.)*

*"We believe that marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union as taught in Scripture (Gen 2:18-25; Mtt. 19:4-6). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy only for a man and woman married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4).*

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture is from the NIV

*"We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image."* All human life is of inestimable worth from conception through death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life including unborn babies, the elderly, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition of life. (Ps 139.)

**3. *"Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God"* (Matt. 4:4)**

God has given – and preserved for us – a revelation of Himself in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, being without error and entirely trustworthy. We, God's people, choose to live our lives under its authority, not just in the doctrines of our faith, but also in the conduct of our lives.

**4. *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23).**

Men and women are created in the image and likeness of God. But in Adam's disobedience in the Garden all men became sinners (Rom. 5:19). We are no longer in paradise – we all are sinners under the just condemnation of God: "there is no one righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10). Our hearts are corrupted by sin such that we can do nothing to merit salvation. This 'total depravity' of man does not mean we are all as bad as we could be, but that there is no aspect of our person that is not touched by sin, no part still 'un-fallen' that can, of itself, reach out to God.

**5. *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory"* (John 1:14)**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God come in the flesh, that he was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life and worked many, mighty miracles. We believe his substitutionary death on the Cross and His bodily resurrection to be the victory of God over sin and death. The shed blood of this spotless Lamb of God is the only ground of our redemption from the guilt and power of sin. We believe in His ascension to the right hand of God which means He is currently reigning in power: bringing redemption to all things.

**6. *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts. 4:12).**

We believe in an exclusive Christ in an inclusive age. No man comes to the Father except through Jesus (John. 14:6). We are not universalists – we do not believe that all men will be saved in the end. *"Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life, and few there are who find it"* (Matt. 7:13, 14)

**7. *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this, not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works so that no one can boast"*. (Eph. 2:8, 9).**

We believe that men and women will *"perish"* (John. 3:16) apart from saving faith in Christ. Sinners are justified by the grace of God alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. But the faith that saves is never alone; it always bears good fruit. Grace that saves our lives always transforms our lives.

**8. *"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and we were all given of the one Spirit to drink."* (1 Cor. 12:13)**

We believe in the personal work of the Holy Spirit in salvation: regenerating those who were dead in sin, indwelling them now with his presence and power and sanctifying them and equipping them to do the work of the ministry. Because we believe Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit, we believe the saints will persevere, by His power, to the end.

**9. "There is one body, and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Eph. 4:4, 5)**

We believe in the unity and priesthood of all believers everywhere, who together make up the universal Church, the Body of Christ, with Jesus Himself as our Head. AND we wholeheartedly embrace Christ's vision that we be "*one*" (John. 17:23) and our responsibility to make that "oneness" visible among us "*so that the world may know that You sent Me*" (John. 17:23)

**10. "...as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 1:7)**

We live in the expectation of the personal, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ when He will come in glory to judge all men: the unrepentant shall be resurrected onto damnation, eternal separation from God's presence, but the righteous shall be raised to everlasting life, to live and reign with Him forever in His glorious kingdom.

**ARTICLE 4: CORE VALUES**

**In carrying out the Purpose of this Church, we will emphasize these 7 Core Values:**

**Community - *Life on a small boat together.*** Jesus calls us to community. We are made in the image of the Triune God, so we only become whole *persons* through relationship. We experience God in community; we grow into the image of Christ through community, and we serve the world around us *from community into community*. We will always be learning how to do community and always be calling people deeper into the many different expressions of it.

**Discipleship - *We intend to actually teach people how to fish for themselves!*** Teaching and preaching have to be central in the life of any church, but information alone does not transform people. We want to school the heart and not just the head; we aim to be practitioners of the Word, not just pupils. The greatest challenge of Jesus is to *internalize* his teachings, not just listen to them. We aim to obey Jesus' Great Commission and become a *disciple-making community*.

**Spirituality - *Jesus loved being around those fishermen ... all day long!*** Biblical spirituality is organic spirituality, it is rooted in the soil of our everyday lives. God doesn't just love us a few times a week when we are engaged in religious practices. The grace of God makes us whole persons whose life in Christ is "24/7". We are not dualists whose spirituality is confined to a separate compartment from the rest of our lives. The doctrine of creation means God finds delight in every inch and moment of my being. Jesus loves to be with us ...always! Really! (Matt. 28:20).

**Missional - *It's easy to fall in love with fishing tackle!*** Assembling and perfecting great fishing tackle is a waste of time if you never go fishing! A church without mission is not a church that's following Jesus. Community that is not *missional community* will become something less than the Church. Jesus was sent into the world, and He sends each one of us into the world (John. 20:21). Every one of us has received a 'call'! To be *missional* means that we will try to understand our culture instead of 'bashing' it. It means we will intentionally enter it in order to proclaim the Gospel within it. We embrace Spirit-led creativity for the sake of mission and servant-leadership that is cooperative, not competitive, with other Kingdom laborers around us.

**Incarnational - People 'go' fishing; they don't wait for the fish to come to them.** Jesus' Great Commission was not: *"Build it, and they will come."* (Invitational), it was *"Go into all the world..."* We want to move the ministry of the gospel out of the so-called 'sanctuary' and into the streets, and into our living rooms and our kitchens. We want to move ministry out of the hands of a professionalized clergy and into the hands of the people of God; out of church buildings and into school buildings, office buildings and all the other marketplaces of life. We believe that the best pulpit for preaching the gospel is our daily life.

**Truth - The only 'lure' we'll use in our fishing is truth spoken in love (Eph. 4:15).** It is truth that sets us free (John. 8:32). And Truth has a name: Jesus, the Word made flesh. We are convinced that truth imbedded in relationship is the path that liberates people to live free, whole and blessed lives. Un-truth wrecks havoc in people's lives; heresy is ultimately cruel. The Church has a huge stake in truth not in order to restrict people, but in order to release people. We will avoid the path of truth-without-love, because then we become hard. We will also avoid the path of love-without-truth because then we become soft. Truth spoken in love builds up people....and that's what we're all about.

**Hospitality "Here, come sit beside me in the boat; I'll make room for you. I was once a stranger myself and new to the crew and someone gave up their seat for me."** We will be a church characterized by hospitality. Hospitality is turn-around grace. When God's grace comes to us, we turn around and give it to others. We will be a stream, not a pond. "Pursue hospitality", Paul commands us (Rom. 12:13), and so we are to pursue after and search for the stranger so that *"there be none who have to sit in the streets or lie with no roof over their heads"* (Origen). Our church family will always leave the porch light on and the front door unlocked.

#### **ARTICLE 5: MEMBERSHIP**

Membership shall be open to anyone who has given satisfactory testimony of personal faith in Jesus Christ and acknowledges essential agreement with our Theological Statement and is willing to abide by Redeemer's Constitution and Bylaws

#### **ARTICLE 6: GOVERNMENT**

The supreme head of this Church is Jesus Christ. All authority is derivative from Him. Those who serve as Elders and Deacons have authority that is merely ministerial (serving in Christ's name) and declarative (our responsibility is to be faithful in ministering the Gospel; the fruitfulness of our ministry is entirely up to God, not us) since the Holy Scriptures are "the only rule of faith and practice". Christ rules His Church through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

The government of the Church, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, shall be vested in its members but administered by the Elders and Deacons, whose particular duties and responsibilities are derived from and limited by the Articles of this Constitution and by our Bylaws.

The Theological Statement does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Christ Our Redeemer's faith and practice, the authority to discern the Bible's meaning and application rests ultimately upon the Elders.

## **ARTICLE 7: SACRAMENTS**

This Church will observe two sacraments: Baptism, which is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible reality, and the Lord's Table, the sacrament of remembrance of the Lord's death for sinners.

## **ARTICLE 8: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

This Constitution can only be amended by a three fourths (3/4) majority vote of the Church members present at a duly called [i.e. by the Elders, with proper notice] Congregational meeting. Voting shall always be done by secret ballot. The proposed amendment must have been recommended for vote by the Elders and must be communicated to the congregation in written form for not less than three consecutive Sundays prior to the date of the Congregational meeting.

# **II. THE BYLAWS OF CHRIST OUR REDEEMER COMMUNITY CHURCH**

## **SECTION 1: MEMBERS**

**Recognition:** Upon completion of a Church Membership Class, new members shall be added to the membership rolls by entering into our **Covenant of Fellowship**. A minimum age of 12 years is recommended. Those joining shall be recognized when the Church comes together to worship.

### **Our Covenant of Fellowship:**

"We do solemnly promise and covenant this day, in dependence upon God, to love one another as Christ has loved us (Jn. 13:34) and to make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). We further covenant to adorn the profession of our faith with holy living (Titus 2:10), to work together in the ministry of the gospel (Phil. 1:5), to live in submission to one another (Eph. 5:21) and to the leadership that God places over us in this church (Heb. 13:17). We promise to follow Christ together and by the grace of God, to walk worthy of the calling with which we have been called (Eph. 4:1)."

**Termination:** The Elders shall do a periodic review of the membership rolls. Those members who have moved away, have chosen to leave the Church or have absented themselves from participation in the worship and service of the Church shall be contacted by the Elders to determine their intentions regarding membership and those who choose to leave will be removed from the membership roll.

**Discipline:** Those who disrupt the peace and purity of the Church will be approached by the Elders with a view to clearly understanding and resolving the situation. In some cases, this could lead to Church discipline, which is taught in the Bible in passages such as I Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 18: 15-20; 2 Tim. 2:14-21; Romans 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6.

## **SECTION 2: ELDERS AND DEACONS**

The Elders and Deacons shall be active members of the Church who are in agreement with its Theological Statement, Constitution and Bylaws and shall be confirmed at the Annual Congregational Meeting (hereafter: ACM).



## ELDERS

The responsibility of the Elders is that of the spiritual oversight of the body. The scriptures are filled with references to shepherd-leadership as the primary model for leadership of God's people (e.g. Ezek. 34; I Peter 5:2). Shepherds care for the flock; protect and feed them; bind up the sick and the lame; and lead them in paths of righteousness. The Pastor and Elders will provide this shepherd leadership.

**a.) Qualifications** A candidate for Elder must meet the following qualifications:

1. Recognize a call by the Holy Spirit to serve as an Elder.
2. Be recognized by the current Elders as qualified under the stipulations for Elders in I **Timothy 3:1-7** and **Titus 1:5-9** (confirmation of calling).
3. Complete the Training Course for Elders.

**b.) Selection** - The Elders should normally number not less than three (3) men. Their number may be increased depending on the needs of the Body and the leading of the Holy Spirit. At least 10 weeks before the ACM, the names of the Elders whose terms are expiring and the likely number of new Elders to be selected shall be announced to the Church. The scriptural passages dealing with the qualifications for an Elder shall be read out and explained. Any member of the Church may make recommendations to the Elders of men they wish to be considered.

**c.) Preparation and Training of Elder Candidates** - Nominees for Elders will complete the Elder Training Course in which the theological stance and core values of the Church and the qualifications and duties of the Elders have been explained and discussed. Following the course, each nominee shall be interviewed by the Elders regarding his readiness and willingness to serve and his agreement with this Church's theological stance and core values. Anyone who has completed the training class and has been previously ordained by this congregation, but has been inactive due either to a leave of absence or a sabbatical, will not be required, but simply encouraged to participate in the training class again.

**d.) Election of Candidates** - Any objections or questions regarding those nominated are to be put to the Elders privately, but not anonymously. A seventy-five percent (75%) majority of votes at the ACM, cast on a secret ballot, shall be required to confirm each nominee.

**e.) Active Term** - The Elders shall be elected for terms of three years unless otherwise specified at the time of election. An Elder may take a leave of absence, and thus become inactive, before his term has expired if this meets with the approval and support of the other Elders. The terms shall be arranged on a rotating basis so that, as nearly as possible, the terms of one-third (1/3) shall expire each year. When an Elder has served two, consecutive terms (6 years), he shall take one year off for a sabbatical before allowing himself to be re-nominated to active duty as an elder.

**f.) Organization, Meetings, and Quorum** — At the first meeting of the Elders after the ACM, the Elders shall elect from their number a **Moderator** and a **Church Clerk**. They may also appoint such committees as are necessary for the effectual oversight of the activities of the Church. The regular meetings of the Elders shall be held at least monthly. Special meetings may be called at the request of the Moderator, the Lead Pastor, or a majority of the Elders. A majority of the Elders shall constitute a quorum, and will act on behalf of all the Elders, unless otherwise specifically required by law or by this Constitution and Bylaws. The meetings of the Elders will be open to members of the Church, but their participation in any discussion must first be recognized by the Moderator.

**g.) Duties** — The Elders are the ruling body of the Church and shall have the authority to act in behalf of the Church with the exception of the Limitations below (g). It shall be the duty of the Elders to:

1. Care for the Church's spiritual condition.
2. Guard the purity of doctrine and life of the Church.
3. Discipline the Church in accordance with the Word of God.
4. Be responsible for examining all who seek membership in the Church.
5. Act for the Church in the acceptance and removal of members, and maintain the roll of active members.
6. Counsel the erring and comfort the sick and afflicted.
7. Inform the Church of all major decisions made in their meetings.
8. Be responsible for the examination and ordination of the Elders and Deacons of the Church.
9. Appoint Trustees for the Church in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth.
10. Hire all ministerial and administrative staff necessary for the health, maintenance and ministries of the Church.

**h.) Limitations** — The Elders cannot:

1. Amend the Constitution and Bylaws of the Church except in accordance with Article 7 of the Constitution and Section 6 of the Bylaws.
2. Call the Lead Pastor or dismiss him without a congregational vote.
3. Purchase, sell, or mortgage real property without a congregational vote.
4. Adopt an Annual Budget without congregational approval.
5. Infringe upon any other right reserved to the congregation by law or by the articles of this Constitution and its Bylaws.

**i.) Termination** — An Elder shall no longer serve, either in an active nor an inactive status if:

1. He resigns.
2. He is removed by the Elders at a duly called meeting by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of those present for any of the following reasons:
  - a.) Refusal to fulfill his responsibilities.
  - b.) Change of his views that result in disagreement with our Theological Statement.
  - c.) Personal conduct or attitude disturbing the purity, peace, or unity of the Church.
  - d.) Failure to live in harmony with the standards of our Constitution and Bylaws.

### **DEACONS (DIACONATE)**

The responsibility of the Deacons is that of serving the physical needs of the Church and overseeing the charitable ministries of the Church (cf. Acts 6: 1-6). The Diaconate should normally number not less than three (3) persons and may be increased as the needs of the Church require.

**a.) Qualifications** A candidate for Deacon must meet the following qualifications:

1. Meet the requirements for deacons set forth in I Tim. 3:8-13.
2. Recognize a call by the Holy Spirit to serve as a Deacon.
3. Complete the Deacons Training Course.
4. Affirm readiness to serve in an interview with the Elders.

**b.) Preparation and Training of Candidates.** Candidates for Deacons shall follow the similar preparation and training as candidates for Elders.

c.) **Term of Office** — Deacons shall have the same term and rotation as the Elders and can request a Leave Of Absence from their term of service in the same way as an Elder.

d.) **Selection** — The procedure for nominating and confirming Deacons shall be the same as that for the Elders.

e.) **Organization, Meetings, Quorum** — At the first meeting of the Diaconate after the ACM, they shall elect from their number a **Moderator** and a **Secretary**. The meetings of the Diaconate shall be held on a regular basis. Special meetings may be called at the request of the Elders, the Moderator, or a majority of the Deacons. A simple majority of the Deacons shall constitute a quorum, and will act on behalf of all the Deacons unless otherwise specified in the Constitution and Bylaws.

f.) **Duties** — The Deacons assist the Elders in the administration and services of the Church. The duties of the Deacons are to:

1. Develop, recruit for and oversee the Mercy & Serving Ministries outside of the Church.
2. Oversee the distribution of our Benevolent Funds.
3. Lead in the administration of the Helps and Services within the Church.
4. Provide for the supervision, maintenance and protection of the properties of the Church.
5. With the Elders, prepare and present an Annual Budget for the coming year at the ACM.

g.) **Limitations.** Deacons are subject to the same limitations as Elders. Further, all major decisions of the Deacons shall be subject to approval by the Elders and shall be presented by the Moderator of the Deacons at the next Elders meeting.

h.) **Termination** — A Deacon shall be terminated by the same procedures as for the termination of an Elder.

### **SECTION 3: LEAD PASTOR**

The term **Pastor** originates from the role of a shepherd to his flock. The **Lead Pastor**, as an Elder, works closely with the other Elders in leading and shepherding the flock. In his role as pastor-teacher, he is to 'equip the saints for the work of the ministry' (Eph. 4:12). As the focal point for implementing the vision, the Lead Pastor also has the role of assembling a leadership team appropriate to the needs and ministries of the flock.

It shall be the responsibility of the Elders to choose a candidate to recommend to the Church for this position.

a.) **Qualifications** - The candidate must:

1. Meet the qualifications of an Elder.
2. Have satisfactory biblical training.
3. Have high moral reputation.
4. Have evident spiritual discernment and gifts.
5. Have leadership and administrative experience.
6. Agree with this Church's Theological Statement and its Constitution and Bylaws.



**b.) Selection** - After being interviewed by the Elders and recommended to the Church by them, the Lead Pastor shall be called by a seventy-five percent (75%) majority of votes cast by secret ballot at a Congregational Meeting duly called and constituted for the express purpose of considering the recommendation. Only one candidate shall be considered at any one meeting.

**c.) Duties** - The Lead Pastor shall be a permanent member of the Elders. With the other Elders, he shall oversee the life of the Church: its ministries, its well-being and its growth into the vision that God has given it.

**d.) Termination** - The Lead Pastor may at any time dissolve his relationship with the Church after first discussing it with the Elders and praying with them through the reasons or circumstances for the resignation. The Church may also terminate the pastoral relationship by calling a congregational meeting to consider the question. The meeting must be initiated by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the votes cast at a duly constituted meeting of the Elders. A simple majority of the votes cast by secret ballot at that Congregational Meeting shall be sufficient to terminate the relationship. In either case, the Lead Pastor shall be entitled to a minimum of one month's salary after the date of termination.

#### **SECTION 4 PASTORAL AND OTHER STAFF**

As the needs of the Church grow and change, other Pastoral or Staff positions can be added by the Elders, but all hiring shall proceed in accordance with a Job Description that clearly stipulates their individual work responsibilities. All staff shall agree with this Church's Theological Statement and its Constitution and Bylaws. Pastoral staff members may become Elders upon fulfilling the normal qualifications and procedures of selection.

#### **SECTION 5: CLERK AND TREASURER:**

**Clerk** — The Church Clerk, shall record the minutes of all congregational meetings as well as the meetings of the Elders. He shall oversee all official/legal correspondence for the Church. He shall provide for the safekeeping of all important papers and documents of the Church.

**Treasurer** — The Church Treasurer shall make payments on all bills that have been duly authorized, keep a full account of all monies received and paid out, and submit a written monthly, quarterly, and annual report to the Deacons of the finances of the Church. He shall make his books available for audit upon request by the Deacons.

#### **SECTION 6: ORDINATION TO SERVICE**

Elders and Deacons shall be ordained to on the Sunday immediately following the ACM. If a newly-elected Elder or Deacon is not able to attend this service, arrangements should be made to ordain him publicly as soon as practical thereafter. In the meantime, he may commence his term of service by affirming his ordination vows before the Elders.

#### **SECTION 7: CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

The Church year shall coincide with the calendar year. The ACM shall be held in early January. Election of Elders and Deacons and adoption of the Annual Budget shall always be included in the agenda at the ACM. . Additional congregational meetings may be called by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the Elders and must be announced for at least three consecutive Sundays prior to the date of the meeting. The majority vote of those members present and voting shall prevail on all

agenda items unless the vote of a greater number is required by the Constitution or the Bylaws. The voting shall be counted by the Church Clerk and the results announced at the same meeting.

#### **SECTION 8: AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the Church members present at a duly-called Congregational meeting. Voting shall always be done by secret ballot. The proposed amendment must have been recommended for vote by three-quarters (3/4) majority vote of the Elders and must be communicated to the congregation in written form for at least three consecutive Sundays prior to the date of the meeting.