



# Covenant Reformed CHURCH

## BOOK OF WORSHIP & ORDER

2024



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# Welcome to Covenant Reformed Church

## **Our Name**

**Covenant:** Because man's standing before God is determined by the covenant he is under, whether in Adam or in Christ. We acknowledge that God's covenants with man are the framework by which we interpret the Scriptures (Genesis 3:14-15; Genesis 9:8-17; Genesis 17:7; Exodus 24:6-8; 2 Samuel 7:8-16; Matthew 26:26-29; Romans 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:11-13).

**Reformed:** Because we hold to the essential tenets of Reformation Theology: Scripture alone, Grace alone, Faith alone, Christ alone, for God's glory alone.

**Church:** Because we are the ἐκκλησία (ekklesia), the called-out ones against whom the gates of Hell will not prevail (Matthew 16:17). We are "A people for God's own possession..." (1 Peter 2:9), salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16) and called to make disciples of every nation (Matthew 28:18-20).

## **Our Affiliation**

Covenant Reformed Church (CRC) is a mission church of Christ Reformed Church in Candor, NY. We are affiliated with the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC).

## **Our Vision**

The vision of Covenant Reformed Church is to build a strong, vibrant, and faithful Christian community that enjoys the benefits of being adopted into God's household of faith, as sons and daughters of the Almighty, through the salvific work of our mediator, Jesus Christ, who is also God. We labor to build a festive community of people, who rejoice in their God, and are tempered by maturity and sound doctrine as we maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3). These things must inform how we live in the home, the church, and in society.

## **Our Mission**

The mission of Covenant Reformed Church is to glorify God and enjoy Him in spirit and in truth; to establish and build up faithful Christian households; and to engage our community with the Gospel for the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

# The Liturgy Summary

## **The Entrance into God's Presence**

Having ordered our lives in preparation for worship, we enter God's presence. In our effectual calling, the Holy Spirit regenerates us. He enables us to embrace our chief end: to glorify and enjoy God. Therefore, our Lord's Day service is an outflowing of a life centered on the worship of God. Coming into a worship service is not meaningful if the rest of our life is not dedicated to God's service.

## **The Call to Worship**

The formal service begins with the call of God to His people to come into his presence for worship and the renewal (or remembrance) of His covenant. We ought to have a sense of the awesome God we serve and be reminded of our duty to worship Him.

## **The Cleansing from sin**

After we are called into God's presence, we are confronted with this holy and almighty God. We should have a sense of our unworthiness. We, therefore, confess our sins to God and, if need be, leave our sacrifice at the altar to make things right with our neighbor. Then the minister reminds us of our forgiveness in Christ.

## **The Consecration by the Word**

We are now prepared to ascend as the smoke of the burnt offering into the throne room of the Almighty God. Once we arrive, we join in the worship around God's throne and are taught by God. He teaches us His Law, we confess the Faith, we hear His Word read and preached, and we respond by offering our service of thanksgiving through our tithes and offerings.

## **The Communion with our Lord**

We then come to the climax of our service: communing at the supper table with our God. He has invited us to come and feed upon the life-giving body and blood of Jesus Christ.

At CRC we practice paedocommunion: as covenant children, the Supper is for them, provided their parents are raising them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14, Legacy Standard Bible [LSB]).

## **The Commissioning to our Work**

Our service concludes with the hearing of the Great Commission. In this we are reminded to go into every nation and make disciples, and we go with God's benediction.

# The Entrance & The Call to Worship

## **The Entrance into God's Presence**<sup>1</sup>

Please arrive early and find a seat. Quietly prepare your heart and mind to meet with our Lord. The collect prayer is a form that may be used to help you prepare for worship. If you have children, now is a good time for them to use the bathroom and get settled.

## **The Call to Worship**

The preaching elder will call the congregation to worship.

Elder: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the holy Spirit be with you!

**Congregation:** And also with you!

**\*Please stand for the song of praise\***

## **Song of Praise**

**Congregation:** AMEN

## **The Collect Prayer**

Elder:

- An address to God.
- An acknowledgment of some aspect of God's nature or character.
- The petition itself.
- The aspiration.
- The memorial pleading.

Example:

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> The Song selections are from the Cantus Christi (2020) & the Bible version used is the Legacy Standard Bible (LSB).

# The Cleansing from Sin

## Penitential or Imprecatory Psalm

**Congregation:** AMEN

## From the Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 82. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

**Congregation:** No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.

Q. 84. What doth every sin deserve?

**Congregation:** Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

Q. 85. What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?

**Congregation:** To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

## **Agnus Dei - #727**

**\*Please sit or kneel as we confess our sins\***

## The Confession of Sin

Elder: **\*moment of silence\*** Let us confess our sins together:

**Congregation:** Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own heart. We have offended against Your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and apart from Your grace, there is no health in us. O Lord, have mercy upon us. Spare all those who confess their faults. Restore all those who are penitent, according to Your promises declared to all people in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake, that we may now live godly, righteous, and sober lives, to the glory of Your holy Name. Amen

## The Cleansing of the Gospel

Elder: Arise and hear good news! **\*rise\*** To all who rest upon Jesus Christ alone for their salvation I declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost!

**Congregation:** AMEN

Elder: Our sins are forgiven through Christ!

**Congregation:** Thanks be to God!

## **Gloria Patri - #736**

# The Consecration by the Word

## The Sursum Corda

Elder: Lift up your hearts.

**Congregation:** We lift them up unto the Lord.

Elder: Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.

**Congregation:** It is proper and right so to do.

## Song of Praise

**Congregation:** AMEN

**\*You may be seated\***

## The Reading of the Law

Elder: Hear the Law of God

**See Appendix A: The Law of God. The congregation will respond with the answers.**

## The Profession of Faith

Elder: Let us now affirm what we believe.

## **The Apostles Creed - #712<sup>2</sup>**

## The Reading of the Scripture

Elder: Hear the Word of the Lord

**See your handout for the responsive reading. The congregation will read the bolded sections.**

## The Preaching of the Word

**See your handout for the sermon text and for space to take notes.**

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<sup>2</sup> Other creeds will be selected at times from the Cantus Christi (2020) – see pages 819-820.



# The Consecration by the Word (Continued)

## The Prayer of Response

Elder: Pastoral prayer (colloquy prayer)

**\*Please Stand for the doxology\***

## **Doxology - #734**

## Thanksgiving

Elder: Let us give thanks to God together.

**Congregation:** Almighty God. Father of all mercies, We your unworthy servants, do give you our most humble and hearty thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all people. We bless you for our creation and preservation and for all the blessings of this life. But above all, we thank you for your inestimable love and the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ. We also thank you for the means of grace and for the hope of glory. We beseech you now to give us that due sense of all your mercies, that our hearts may be truly thankful, and that we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all, honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

## Tithes & Offerings

Elder: We will now bring our offerings as we sing.

## Song of thanksgiving

**Congregation:** AMEN

## The Communion with our Lord

### The Lord's Supper

**\*You may be seated as we come to the table of our Lord\***

Elders: Will give the words of institution and serve the elements to the congregation.

### Song of Response

**Congregation: AMEN**

### The Lord's Prayer

Elder: Let us pray to God together

**Congregation:** "Our Father who is in heaven, 'Hallowed be Your name. 'Your kingdom come. 'Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 'Give us this day our daily bread. 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. 'For Yours is the kingdom, power, and glory forever. Amen.'" (Matthew 6:9-13)

Elder: "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." (Matthew 6:14-15)

## The Commissioning to our Work

### The Great Commission

**\*Please stand\***

Elder: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

**Congregation: AMEN**

### The Benediction

Elder: Go now with God's blessing

"Yahweh bless you, and keep you; Yahweh make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; Yahweh lift up His face on you, And give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)

**Congregation: AMEN, AMEN, AMEN!**

## Appendix A: The Law of God

### From the Westminster Shorter Catechism

#### **Preface**

Q. 39. What is the duty which God requireth of man?

**Congregation:** The duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to his revealed will.

#### **The First Commandment**

Q. 45. Which is the first commandment?

**Congregation:** The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment?

**Congregation:** The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

Q. 47. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

**Congregation:** The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying, the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

Q. 48. What are we specially taught by these words, before me," in the first commandment?

**Congregation:** These words, before me," in the first commandment teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

### **The Second Commandment**

Q. 49. Which is the second commandment?

**Congregation:** The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Q. 50. What is required in the second commandment?

**Congregation:** The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his Word.

Q. 51. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

**Congregation:** The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his Word.

Q. 52. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

**Congregation:** The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

### **The Third Commandment**

Q. 53. Which is the third commandment?

**Congregation:** The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Q. 54. What is required in the third commandment?

**Congregation:** The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.

Q. 55. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

**Congregation:** The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known.

Q. 56. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

**Congregation:** The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

### **The Fourth Commandment**

Q. 57. Which is the fourth commandment?

**Congregation:** The fourth commandment is, Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

Q. 58. What is required in the fourth commandment?

**Congregation:** The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself..

Q. 59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

**Congregation:** From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week, ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.

Q. 60. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?

**Congregation:** The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Q. 61. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

**Congregation:** The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission, or careless performance, of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

Q. 62. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?

**Congregation:** The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath day.

**The Fifth Commandment**

Q. 63. Which is the fifth commandment?

**Congregation:** The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Q. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment?

**Congregation:** The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

Q. 65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

**Congregation:** The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.

Q. 66. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

**Congregation:** The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is, a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

**The Sixth Commandment**

Q. 67. Which is the sixth commandment?

**Congregation:** The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.

Q. 68. What is required in the sixth commandment?

**Congregation:** The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

Q. 69. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

**Congregation:** The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

**The Seventh Commandment**

Q. 70. What is the seventh commandment?

**Congregation:** The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Q. 71. What is required in the seventh commandment?

**Congregation:** The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behaviour.

Q. 72. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

**Congregation:** The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

### **The Eighth Commandment**

Q. 73. Which is the eighth commandment?

**Congregation:** The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

Q. 74. What is required in the eighth commandment?

**Congregation:** The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

Q. 75. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

**Congregation:** The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth, or may, unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbor's, wealth, or outward estate.

### **The Ninth Commandment**

Q. 76. Which is the ninth commandment?

**Congregation:** The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Q. 77. What is required in the ninth commandment?

**Congregation:** The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness bearing.

Q. 78. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

**Congregation:** The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbor's good name.

### **The Tenth Commandment**

Q. 79. Which is the tenth commandment?

**Congregation:** The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

Q. 80. What is required in the tenth commandment?

**Congregation:** The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.

Q. 81. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

**Congregation:** The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

## Appendix B: Constitution & Bylaws

Charter Bylaws Adopted: **May 19th, 2024.**

Elders: **Aaron Masters, Nicholas Wells**

### **PREAMBLE:**

**WHEREAS**, it is the expressed purpose of God, our Heavenly Father, to call out of the world a people who shall constitute the Body or Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, built and established upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone; and,

**WHEREAS**, God having ordained that this Universal Church should find its expression in and through local churches, enjoining them to assemble for worship, fellowship, counsel, and instruction in the Word of God, and for the work of the ministry, and for the exercise of those spiritual gifts and offices provided for in the New Testament, therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that we do constitute a particular Bible-believing church. This constitution and bylaws supplement the Articles of Incorporation and supersede all other church constitutions and other rules of the church order previously adopted.

### **CONSTITUTION**

#### **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this Church shall be Covenant Reformed Church

#### **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

**Section 1.** To establish and maintain a place of worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, through the Holy Spirit, and for the promotion of Christian fellowship and edification.

**Section 2.** To be God's instrument in the gathering in of His Elect through the preaching of the gospel.

**Section 3.** To be salt and light in the unbelieving world.

**Section 4.** Mission Statement: The mission of Covenant Reformed Church is to glorify God and enjoy Him in spirit and in truth; to establish and build up faithful Christian households; and to engage our community with the Gospel for the advancement of Christ's kingdom.



### **ARTICLE III. PREROGATIVES**

**Section 1.** This Church shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the Holy Scriptures, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace... till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:3, 13). We affirm and proclaim that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto Jesus Christ! Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen! This document is neither sacred nor holy but gives guidance for our existing session and describes our procedures.

**Section 2.** To have a membership determined by the session and to discipline its members according to the Scriptures.

**Section 3.** To choose or call its pastoral leadership, elect, license and ordain its elders and deacons and transact all other business pertaining to its life and conduct as a church.

**Section 4.** To establish and maintain such departments and institutions as may be deemed necessary for the propagation of the Gospel and for the work of the church.

**Section 5.** To purchase or acquire by gift, bequest, or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell subject to the securing of a court order, convey, mortgage, lease, which is limited to five years by State statute, or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purposes, all in accordance with its constitution and bylaws.

### **ARTICLE IV. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

Sources of Authority: Covenant Reformed Church recognizes the 66 canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as inspired by the Holy Spirit, infallible, and inerrant in the original writings. These are the supreme and final authority for life, faith, and practice.

The subordinate standards we uphold are The Westminster Standards (1646-1648) with the stated exceptions and Articles I-XIII of the CREC Constitution in addition to the Constitution and Bylaws of Covenant Reformed Church. We chose the Westminster Standards because of their doctrinal clarity and precision. However, we also recognize the Three Forms of Unity because of its pastoral tone, history in Reformed thinking, and excellence as a guide in our teaching.

### Exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith

1. Chapter 7: Of God's Covenant with Man— Paragraph 2: (cf. Chapter 19, paragraph 1, 6). We would clarify that the "covenant of works" was not meritorious, and we deny that any covenant can be kept without faith. Good works, even in this covenant were a result of faith in the Word of God, as illustrated by the Sabbath rest which was Adam's first full day in the presence of God: a recognition of his total dependence upon God's finished work.
2. Chapter 21: Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day— Paragraph 8: We believe that along with works of piety, necessity, and mercy, the command also calls us to rest our bodies on the Sabbath (Gen. 2:2-3; Ex. 16:30; 31:15-17). We do not believe the intention of Scripture was to exclude recreation, especially in the context of the fellowship of God's people.
3. Chapter 23: Of the Civil Magistrate-- Paragraph 3: "[The Civil Magistrate] has power to call synods, to be present at them and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." The final phrase gives the Civil Magistrate authority over spiritual matters, which is in essence a form of Erastianism.
4. Chapter 25: Of the Church— Paragraph 6: Though we believe the Pope of Rome to be anti-Christian, we do not believe him necessarily to be the Anti-Christ, Man of Lawlessness, or Beast of Revelation, etc.
5. Chapter 27: Of the Sacraments— Paragraph 4: We believe that all elders lawfully ordained are called to labor in the ministry of the Word and sacrament, and therefore must be sufficiently gifted as a prerequisite for the office. We, therefore, believe that it is permissible for the sacraments to be administered with the oversight of any elder, lawfully ordained, and for these elders to preach the Word. We would also clarify that there is no qualifying difference in Scripture between those who hold the office of ruling elder or teaching elder, all must shepherd the flock and be able to teach and preach the Word. If it is feasible to do so, it is a great gift to Christ's church to have one or more elders who are vocationally able to devote themselves to the labor of teaching and preaching the Word of God.
6. Chapter 29: Of The Lord's Supper— Paragraph 7: We would clarify that "worthy receivers" of the Lord's Supper should include all baptized covenant members who are able to physically eat and drink the elements, including very young children being raised in the discipline and admonition of the Lord (if they are not under discipline). We deny that an artificial standard of age or mental capacity is consistent with the Biblical basis for partaking of the Supper.

## **ARTICLE V. SACRAMENTS**

The Sacraments of the church are: (1) Baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and (2) the Lord's Supper (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25).

## **ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS**

**Section 1.** Church Government: A session of elders shall govern the church. Elders shall be male members of the church who are at least thirty years old. Only those men judged by the church to fulfill the requirements for elders described in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 shall be elected elders. Qualified men may be elected as elders at any called or stated congregational meeting by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote and assume office upon election. The congregation ratifies their eldership after two years of service and again after seven years of total service during a stated congregational meeting. Elders serve for life unless they retire, transfer to another local church, resign, the congregation does not ratify their eldership after the twoyear and seven-year reviews, or they are removed through formal church discipline. The congregation in in like manner may elect Deacons. They must be male members at least twenty years old who meet the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3. The session shall determine the quorum for the session of elders and the board of deacons (if one exists) by the session. Elders may oversee the administration of the sacraments.

**Section 2.** The session may invite elders of other recognized reformed bodies to preach and administer the sacraments and may invite other men whom the session deems qualified to exhort and assist in leading worship.

## **ARTICLE VII. MEMBERSHIP**

Individuals shall be eligible for membership in this church according to the bylaws as herein set forth below.

## **ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS**

**Congregational or Corporate Meetings:** There shall be an annual Corporate and Congregational meeting sometime in June where a report of expenditures for the previous year and a budget for the Next fiscal year shall be presented. The time and place shall be announced by a member of the session before Sunday worship at least two weeks in advance. For corporate business all communing members in good and regular standing who are present and at least eighteen (18) years of age are entitled to vote. Corporate business includes, but is not limited to the sale, purchase, or transfer of property, and changes to the by-laws. For ecclesiastical business all communing members in good and regular standing who are present and at least twenty (20) years of age are entitled to vote.

Additional corporate and /or congregational meetings may be called by the session and announced in the same manner. The session shall always call a corporate meeting when requested by 25% of the communing members at least eighteen (18) years old, and likewise, a congregational meeting when requested by 25% of the communing members at least twenty (20) years old. The request must be in writing. The quorum for all corporate and/or congregational meetings shall be at least 25% of the eligible voting members.

#### **ARTICLE IX. FINANCES**

The church shall be financed according to the scriptural method by the tithes and offerings of the members and friends of the church. (Malachi 3:10; Hebrews 7:4-9).

Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of the church shall be from June 1 through May 31 of the following year.

#### **ARTICLE X. PROPERTY**

**Section 1.** All property shall be taken, held, sold, transferred or conveyed in the name of the church in accordance with New York State law, according to the Articles of Incorporation.

**Section 2.** No real property of the church shall be sold, leased, mortgaged or otherwise acquired without the same having been authorized by at least a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at a regular business meeting or special business meeting of the church which has been duly called for the consideration of the proposal.

**Section 3.** The Elders and Treasurers shall certify in such conveyance, lease, or mortgage that the same has been duly authorized by the vote of the membership. Such certificates shall be held to be conclusive evidence thereof.

#### **ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this constitution may be made by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the church who are in attendance at any regular or special corporate meeting called for that purpose, provided that due notice of such proposed change shall have been made at all services on at least two Sundays preceding the time for such meeting.

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1. Church Membership:** The session shall approve applicants for membership based on the requirements of holy scripture and remove members through either transfer to another evangelical Christian church, death, or excommunication. If either one or both parents of a child are members, the child is a member by reason of God's covenant (Genesis 17; Acts 2:36-42). The parent or parents should promptly present the child for baptism. Members who move away from the area shall be given a reasonable amount of time to transfer their membership. That time, usually within 6 months, is to be determined by the session. Members of any Trinitarian Christian church in good standing who are baptized in the triune name of God are invited to participate in communion. Worshippers who are not members of any Christian church but have been duly baptized in the triune name of God may participate in communion upon the approval of the elders present. New believers who are baptized may partake of the Lord's Supper on that same day.

**Section 2.** Members of Covenant Reformed Church are expected to uphold the following

#### **MEMBERSHIP VOWS:**

1. "Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in need of salvation by Christ, and do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, receiving and resting upon Him alone as He is offered in the gospel?"
  - a. **We do**
2. "Have you been baptized in accordance with His Word?"
  - a. **We have**
3. "Do you swear in the name of God, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live in a way that becomes followers of Christ?"
  - a. **We do**
4. "Do you swear in the name of God to support the ministry of this church in its worship and work, submitting in the Lord to its government and discipline, while pursuing its purity and peace?"
  - a. **We do**

And to the congregation:

1. "As a congregation of Christ, do you receive [this Christian/these Christians] into the covenant fellowship of this local church together with you, renewing your membership vows as you do so?"
  - a. **We do with God's help!**

**Section 3. Church Discipline:** Church discipline shall be carried out, when necessary, by the session according to Biblical principles, especially Numbers 16; Deuteronomy 19:15-21; Matthew 18:15-20, 1Corinthians 5; Galatians 2:11-21 & Galatians 6. Discipline may consist of discipleship, admonishment, and excommunication. Elders and deacons may be suspended or deposed from office. No member shall be excommunicated without an opportunity for a formal hearing before the session. Likewise, no elder or deacon shall be suspended or deposed from office without an opportunity for a formal hearing before the session. The session shall explain in writing with supporting evidence any discipline imposed after a formal hearing and attempt to deliver or mail it to the disciplined member.

## **ARTICLE II. DUTIES OF ELDERS AND DEACONS**

**Section 1. The Elders:** The elders shall provide for all the worship services of the church and shall arrange for all other meetings. No person shall be invited to speak or preach in the church without approval of the session. They shall be responsible for the maintenance and cleanliness of the church property and delegation of work. Marriage may be performed for a biological male and female couple when at least one of them has been a member of Covenant Reformed Church for at least three months' time, and the other is a member in good standing of a local church received by the session. Other examples of duties are burial of the dead and visitations.

**Section 2. The Deacons:** The deacons are church officers who assist the elders in shepherding the congregation members. The duties shall include but not be limited to assisting the elders within the Church, ministering to the physical and material needs of the body, and performing other duties as assigned by the elders. We consider deacons to be potential future elders in training.

## **ARTICLE III. FINANCES**

**Section 1.** The session shall generally oversee all financial matters. All records shall be available for review by members in the presence of an elder.

**Section 2.** The elders shall be given regular and adequate financial support, the amount and manner of which shall be recommended by the elders but determined by the congregation.

**Section 3.** All offerings shall be counted by two men authorized by the session, one of whom shall deposit all funds in a fiduciary institution authorized by the church in the church's name.

**Section 4. Trustees of the Corporation:** the session shall serve as the trustees if there are three or more elders. If there are less than three elders, deacons shall be called to serve as trustees. If there are not three elders and deacons combined, trustees shall be elected from the congregation to serve for three years.



