

THE CONSTITUTION OF
THE COVENANT EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH
(CERC)

ARTICLE I NAME

The Name of the Church shall be, THE COVENANT EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH (CERC), hereinafter referred to as the Church.

ARTICLE II THE ADDRESS

The place of business of the Church shall be at 21 Tessensohn Road Singapore 0821 or any other place as decided by the Session from time to time subject to the approval of the Registrar of Societies. The Church shall carry out her activities only in places or premises which have prior written approval from the relevant authorities.

ARTICLE III OBJECTS

The objects of the Church shall be:

- A. To promote and maintain the true worship of the only true, righteous and holy God of heaven and earth (Exodus 20:1-5; Matthew 4:10; John 4:23-24).
- B. To preach the gospel of Christ Jesus for the gathering and perfecting of the saints (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-47; Romans 10:11-15; I Corinthians 1:17-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; II Timothy 4:1-2).
- C. To observe the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper according to the ordinance of Christ Jesus (Matthew 26:26-29; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; I Corinthians 11:23-26).
- D. To promote and maintain the fellowship of the saints in Christ Jesus (John 17:21-24; I Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:1-16; Hebrew 10:23-25; I John 1:7).
- E. To exercise Christian discipline in the Church of Jesus (Matthew 16:16-19; Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5:1-5; II Thessalonians 3:6; I Timothy 1:20; Titus 3:10).
- F. To minister the mercies of Christ to the needy within and without the fellowship of the Church (Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 6:1-6; Galatians 6:10).
- G. To defend the faith once delivered to the saints (Philippians 1:27; II Timothy 1:13; Jude 3).

ARTICLE IV THE STATEMENT OF FAITH OF THE CHURCH

The faith of the Church shall be in accordance with the doctrine as contained in the Old Testament and New Testament of the Bible and in harmony with the historic Reformed and Presbyterian faith which is set forth in the Three Forms of Unity, namely, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dordrecht.

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

A. Types

This shall be of two categories:

- 1. Communicant Members
 They are persons baptized in obedience to Christ's command, who

have made a credible profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, whose conduct is holy and worthy of the Gospel of Christ and who adhere to the constitution of the Church. They are added to the Church by knowledgeable profession of faith in Holy Baptism, reaffirmation of faith or letter of transfer from a sister-church or a church of like precious faith.

2. Non-communicant Members

They are baptized children of Communicant Members and are all other baptized persons who have not made profession of faith and are under the care of the congregation.

B. Privileges And Responsibilities

1. All members have the privileges of the blessings of the ministry of the Gospel of Christ:

- a. Hearing the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and testifying of the same.
- b. Receiving the Sacrament of Holy Baptism for the children of Communicant Members and holy participating in the Lord's Supper for Communicant Members. Children of believing parents born and raised in the Church shall be permitted to participate in the Lord's Supper after they come to years of understanding and make public confession of their faith.
- c. Being subject to the pastoral care and discipline of the Church. (See Article V D.)

2. Members are expected to strive conscientiously to live according to the light given to them by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, to faithfully attend the Worship Services, and to support wholeheartedly the work of the Church.

C. Right To Rule

All male Communicant Members (hereafter known as Voting Members) shall have the right to vote at Congregational Meetings and to hold the special offices of the Church.

D. Church Discipline

Our Lord Jesus Christ has given to the Church the keys of the Kingdom, which includes the authority of Church discipline. Thus, the Church through the Board of Elders shall have the right to excommunicate a member from the Church, whose confession or life is not in accord with the teachings of the Word of God as held by the Church.

Excommunication is an extreme measure which shall be performed only after a member, who has been repeatedly pastorally admonished, refuses to repent. Any person so cut off from the Church shall be received again into the Church by the Board of Elders upon evidence of repentance and confession of sin.

ARTICLE VI CHURCH GOVERNMENT

A. The Church shall be governed according to the Reformed and Presbyterian form of Church Government recognizing:

1. The supreme and lordly authority and power of Jesus Christ over the Church.

2. Christ rules His church by His Word and Spirit.
 3. Christ rules His church through the special offices of Elders and Deacons.
 4. The office of all believers in the church.
 5. The autonomy of the local church.
 6. The principle of church federation according to the principle of the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ.
- B. The special officers in the Church shall be the Elders and the Deacons.
- C. The governing body of the Church shall be the Board of Session, comprising the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE VII CHURCH SESSION

- A. This is the governing body of the Church and it consists of at least 3 but not more than 12 members made up of the Board of Elders and Board of Deacons as follows:

A President/Moderator

A Vice-President/Assistant Moderator

A Honorary Secretary/Clerk of Session

A Honorary Treasurer

Not more than 8 Committee members

Except for the President/Moderator who shall be called for life, all other members of the Session shall be elected for a term of 3 years. The Honorary Treasurer shall not be eligible for re-election to the same post for a second consecutive term. Unless with the approval of the Registrar of Societies, all Session members shall be Singapore Citizens or Singapore Permanent Residents. In the case when there are only 3 members in the Session, the key appointments of President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer must be filled first.

- B. Duties of office-bearers shall be as follows:
1. The President/Moderator shall be a Pastor and he shall preside at all the Church Session and Annual Congregational Meetings. He shall represent the Church in her dealings with outside persons.

In the absence of a Pastor, a Ruling Elder shall be elected. (See Article VIII B.)
 2. The Vice-President/Assistant Moderator shall be an Elder. He shall deputize for the President/Moderator in the latter's absence.
 3. The Honorary Secretary/Clerk of Session shall be elected from among members of the Session. He shall be responsible for:
 - a. Recording the proceedings and keeping minutes of all Congregational and Session Meetings.
 - b. Giving notice of all Congregational and Session Meetings and distributing of agenda for the appropriate meetings. (See Article XII.)

- c. Presenting the annual report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
 - d. Keeping of archives.
 - e. Handling of all correspondence.
 - f. Maintaining an up-to-date register of membership at all times.
 - g. Any other duties as directed by the Session.
4. The Treasurer shall also be elected from among members of the Session. He shall be responsible for:
- a. Keeping with him a cash balance of not more than S\$500/- for petty cash after making all regular payments.
 - b. Depositing whatever is in excess of S\$500/- in the name of the Church with a bank designated by the Session. Cheques for withdrawal from the bank will be signed by the President, Vice-President or Honorary Secretary in addition to the Treasurer.
 - c. Keeping a record of all monies received and expended, and presenting an audited statement of accounts at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
 - d. Any other duties as directed by the Session.
- C. The Session as a body shall be responsible for:
- 1. The spiritual welfare and needs of the Church.
 - 2. The appointment of committees and commissions to undertake specific affairs on behalf of the Session.
 - 3. The taking care of and the control of the use of the property and possession of the Church.
 - 4. The expending on behalf of the Church of any single sum not exceeding half of the previous fiscal year's total collection.
 - 5. The preparation of the agenda for and the presentation of the proposed budget at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
 - 6. The planning and supervision of the financial programmes of the Church through the appropriate committees.
 - 7. Ensuring proper support of the Pastor(s).
- D. Within the Session, equality shall be maintained with respect to the duties of the individual office-bearers.
- E. The Session shall meet regularly as specified in Article XII C and D.
- F. Any changes in the Session shall be notified to the Registrar of Societies and the Commissioner of Charities within two (2) weeks of the change.
- G. Where a conflict of interest arises at a Session meeting, the Session member concerned should not vote on the matter nor participate in discussions. He should also offer to withdraw from the meeting, and the other Session members should decide if this is required.

- A. This is a Board of at least two Elders; men who are called and fitted to the service of this office by the Holy Spirit for the edification of the Church and the evangelical discharge of the work of the ministry. They must be holy, blameless, exemplary in their lives, apt to teach and rule, and must be willing to give themselves to the Lord unto the work of the ministry.
- B. Of Elders there shall be a distinction in labour, as to those who are specially called to labour in Word and Doctrine - usually called Pastors (Teaching Elders); and those who join the Pastors in ruling and governing - usually called Ruling Elders.
- C. The Board of Elders is formed only when the Session deems necessary for the division of labours in the Church. The moderator of the Session shall also be the moderator of the Board of Elders. An assistant moderator and a secretary shall be elected. In the absence of a Board of Elders, the Session will assume her responsibilities as detailed in Article VIII D.
- D. The Board of Elders shall be responsible for:
1. The ministry of the Word.
 2. The administration of the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 3. The exercising of discipline in the Church according to the Word of God.
 4. The continuing in prayer for the Church.
 5. The spiritual welfare of the Church as in watching and praying for the members and in taking care of all the spiritual needs of members by instructing, admonishing, cherishing, and comforting them as their condition, occasion, and necessity so require.
 6. The selection of candidates for the Church offices by determining, in prior consultation with members of the congregation, men qualified to the office(s) and then formulating a list of nominee(s) for the purpose of an election.
 7. The ordination of office-bearers elected by the Church.
 8. The supervision of the office-bearers of the Church.
 9. The supervision of all public worship and preaching services, instruction classes, prayer meetings, and all other efforts aimed at the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 10. The receiving of confessing believers into the Church membership.
 11. The governing of the Church and seeing that all things are done decently and in order.
 12. The keeping of a membership register, and minutes of Session, Board of Elders', Board of Deacons', and Congregational Meetings.
- E. The Elders shall be ex-officio members of all Committees of the

Church.

- F. The Board of Elders shall meet regularly as specified in Article XII E and F.

ARTICLE IX

QUALIFICATIONS AND CALL OF ELDERS

- A. Men eligible for the Eldership must evidence to the satisfaction of the Board of Elders the qualifications listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- B. The Pastor (Teaching Elder), in addition to Article IX A, must possess training for the ministry as may meet the satisfaction of the Board of Elders.
- C. The procedures for the election of Elders shall be as follows:-
 - a. Nomination of nominees
 - b. Approbation of nominees
 - c. Election
- D. The nominees shall be determined by the Board of Elders. The number of nominees presented could be equal to the number of Elders needed or could be 'double the number of Elders needed i.e. double slate'.
- E. Nominees will be put up for approbation for a 2-week period. All lawful objections are to be lodged with the Session in writing during the approbation period whether sent by letter or brought in person to the Session meeting. After the approbation period, objections may no longer be brought.
- F. Election shall be by ballot.
 - a. If the number of nominees presented is equal to the number of Elders needed, no voting is necessary as the congregation has already given the approval through approbation. No congregation meeting needs to be called to elect the nominees and they shall be installed/ordained accordingly.
 - b. If double slate is presented, the nominees who receive a 'simple majority' will be elected into the office. Blank votes and abstentions will be deducted from the total vote cast. In the event of a tie vote, the Chairman will cast his vote to break the tie.
- G. The Elder shall receive the call through the hands of the Elders and shall, upon acceptance of the call, be ordained by prayer and imposition of hands.
- H. The Pastor is called for life and shall not forsake his office except for weighty reasons and only with the consent of the Session.
- I. The Ruling Elder shall remain in office for three years and shall be eligible for re-election. He likewise shall not forsake his office except for weighty reasons, and only with the consent of the Session.
- J. The Elder, once lawfully called may properly leave his Congregation for another, but only with the consent of the Session.

ARTICLE X

BOARD OF DEACONS

- A. This is a Board of at least two Deacons; men who are called and fitted to the service of this office by the Holy Spirit for the material and

spiritual welfare of the Church by the ministry of mercy. The Deacons, like the Elders, must be holy and blameless, leading exemplary lives. According to the Word of God, they must be "grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience".

- B. The Board of Deacons shall elect from among themselves her own moderator, assistant moderator and secretary.
- C. The Board of Deacons shall be responsible for:
 - 1. The diligent collection of alms.
 - 2. The informing of the Congregation of the alms needs and exhorting them to give accordingly.
 - 3. The faithful distribution of alms to the poor as their needs may require.
 - 4. The keeping and giving of an account of the alms fund to the Session and the Congregation at regular intervals as required by the Session.
 - 5. The visitation and comforting of the distressed.
 - 6. Any other duties as directed by the Session.

ARTICLE XI

QUALIFICATIONS AND CALL OF DEACONS

- A. Men eligible for the Diaconate must evidence to the satisfaction of the Board of Elders the qualifications listed in I Timothy 3:8-13.
- B. The procedures for the election of Deacons shall be as follows:-
 - a. Nomination of nominees
 - b. Approbation of nominees
 - c. Election
- C. The nominees shall be determined by the Board of Elders. The number of nominees presented could be equal to the number of Deacons needed or could be 'double the number of Deacons needed i.e. double slate'.
- D. Nominees will be put up for approbation for a 2-week period. All lawful objections are to be lodged with the Session in writing during the approbation period whether sent by letter or brought in person to the Session meeting. After the approbation period, objections may no longer be brought.
- E. Election shall be by ballot.
 - a. If the number of nominees presented is equal to the number of Deacons needed, no voting is necessary as the congregation has already given the approval through approbation. No congregation meeting needs to be called to elect the nominees and they shall be installed/ordained accordingly.
 - b. If double slate is presented, the nominees who receive a 'simple majority' will be elected into the office. Blank votes and abstentions will be deducted from the total vote cast. In the event of a tie vote, the Chairman will cast his vote to break the tie.
- F. The Deacon shall receive the call through the hands of the Elders and

shall, upon acceptance of the call, be ordained by prayer and imposition of hands.

- G. The Deacon shall remain in office for three years and shall be eligible for re-election. He shall not forsake his office except for weighty reasons, and only with the consent of the Session.
- H. As the need arises, Deacons may partake of the work of Elders.

ARTICLE XII

MEETINGS

- A. The Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM) shall be held in June. At this meeting, the Session shall report on the work of the Church and announce plans for the next twelve months. Other items of business shall include matters arising from the minutes of the last Congregational Meeting. Authority is vested on the ACM to adopt the previous financial year's accounts and current financial year's budget, to elect office-bearers and auditors, and to deliberate on any other matters on the agenda. Notice and agenda of the meetings shall be sent to the members at least two weeks before the meeting.
- B. Extra Congregational Meeting (ECM) shall be called at the joint request of any three members of the Session or at the request of at least one-tenth of the Communicant Members. The ECM shall be held within fourteen days of the request. Notice and agenda for this meeting shall be sent to the members at least five days before the date of the meeting.
- C. Session Meeting (SM) shall be held at least once a month. The agenda for the meeting shall be communicated to the members of the Session at least three days before the meeting.
- D. Extra Session Meeting (ESM) shall be called at the joint request of any two members of the Session or at the request of at least one-tenth of the Communicant Members. Notice and agenda shall be communicated to the Session members at least thirty-six hours before the meeting.
- E. Elders' Meeting (EM) shall be held at least once a month. Notice and agenda for the meeting shall be communicated to the Elders at least three days before the meeting.
- F. Extra Elders' Meeting (EEM) shall be called at the joint request of any two Elders. Notice and agenda shall be communicated to the Elders at least thirty-six hours before the meeting.
- G. Deacons' Meeting (DM) shall be held at least once a month. Notice and agenda for the meeting shall be communicated to the Deacons at least three days before the meeting.
- H. Extra Deacons' Meeting (EDM) shall be called at the joint request of any two Deacons. Notice and agenda shall be communicated to the Deacons at least thirty-six hours before the meeting.
- I. Order of Meeting - All of the above-mentioned meetings shall begin with Scripture reading and prayer, and end with prayer. Notice of such meetings shall be publicly announced to the Congregation, unless not possible.
- J. Quorum shall be as follows:
 - 1. At least half of the Voting Members shall constitute a quorum at a Congregational Meeting.
 - 2. At least two-thirds of the members of the Session/Board of

Elders/Board of Deacons shall constitute a quorum at their respective meetings.

3. Should there be no quorum, another Congregational/Session/Elders'/Deacons' Meeting may be called after half an hour, and at the reconvened meeting, the members present, whatever the number, shall constitute the quorum. The agenda fixed for the previous meeting shall be discussed and the decision(s) reached shall be final. No alteration to the agenda shall be made during the period of postponement.

K. Voting shall be as follows:

1. Proxy voting shall be permitted only on the first ballot, subject to the approval of the body meeting. Such votes shall be submitted to the chairman through any member of the meeting.
2. In case of Church Discipline, a member's right to vote may be suspended or restored upon the decision of the Board of Elders.

L. Observer - Anyone may sit in as an observer in any meeting with the prior consent of the chairman of the meeting.

ARTICLE XIII FINANCE

The Church, a non-profit institution, shall be supported by free-will offering and tithes of her members and other Christians, and by such other income as approved by the Session. The financial year of the Church shall be from 1st June to 31st May.

ARTICLE XIV INTERNAL AUDIT

Two members, not members of the Session, shall be elected as Honorary Auditors at each Annual Congregational Meeting and shall hold office for one year only and may not be re-elected to a consecutive term. They shall be required to audit each year's account and present a report at the Annual Congregational Meeting. They may be required by the Session to audit the Church's accounts from any period within their tenure of office at any date and make a report to the Session.

ARTICLE XV TRUSTEES

Immovable properties acquired by the Church shall be held in the name of the Church alone and vested in Trustees approved by the Church, subject to a declaration of trust. The Trustees shall not effect any sale or mortgage of property without the prior approval of the Congregational Meeting of members. Any Trustee may at anytime resign his trusteeship. If a trustee dies or becomes a lunatic or of unsound mind or moves permanently or is absent from the Republic of Singapore for a period of one year, he shall be deemed to have resigned his trusteeship. If a Trustee is guilty of misconduct of such a kind as to render it undesirable that he continues as a Trustee, a Congregational Meeting may remove him from his trusteeship. Vacancies in the trusteeship may be filled at a Congregational Meeting, but the number shall not be greater than five or less than two. Notice of any proposal to remove a Trustee from his trusteeship or to appoint a new Trustee to fill a vacancy must be given by affixing in the premises of the Church a document containing such proposal at least two weeks before the meeting at which the proposal is to be discussed. The result of such a meeting shall then be notified to the Commissioner of Charities. The address of immovable properties, name of Trustees and any subsequent changes must be notified to the Commissioner of Charities.

ARTICLE XVI RULES, REGULATIONS AND BY-LAWS

The Session shall have the power to make rules, regulations and by-laws in accordance with the Word of God and Constitution of the Church on the conduct

of the general or specific affairs of the Church.

ARTICLE XVII AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

- A. No alterations or additions to the Constitution shall be made except by the Session of the Church.
- B. Any proposal for amendment to the Constitution shall be published to the Congregation at least fourteen days prior to the Session Meeting for amendment.
- C. Amendments to the Constitution shall be carried only if at least three-quarters of the votes cast at the Session Meeting are in favour of them.
- D. Any amendment to the Constitution made by the Session shall be published to the Congregation at least fourteen days before the amendments are submitted to the Registrar of Societies.
- E. Amendments to the Constitution shall not come into force without the prior sanction of the Registrar of Societies and the Commissioner of Charities.

ARTICLE XVIII INTERPRETATION

In the event of any question or matter arising out of any point in this Constitution over which there is a dispute in meaning or arising out of any point which is not expressly provided for in the Constitution, the Session shall, by a majority vote, decide on the interpretation to be adopted or the necessary steps to be taken at her discretion.

ARTICLE XIX SAVING CLAUSE

All matters, actions, appointments and others which are contrary to the provisions of this Constitution shall be null and void.

ARTICLE XX PROHIBITIONS

- A. Gambling of any kind and the playing of paikow or mahjong, whether for stakes or not, is forbidden on the Church's premises. The introduction of materials for gambling or drug taking and of bad characters into the premises is prohibited.
- B. The funds of the Church shall not be used to pay the fines of members who have been convicted in Court.
- C. The Church shall not engage in any Trade Union activity as defined in any written law relating to trade unions for the time being in force in Singapore.
- D. The Church shall not hold any lottery, whether confined to its members or not, in the name of the Church or its office-bearers, committee or members.
- E. The Church shall not indulge in any political activity or allow her funds and/or premises to be used for political purposes.
- F. The Church shall not attempt to restrict or interfere with trade or make directly or indirectly any recommendation to, any arrangement with her members which has the purpose or is likely to have the effect of fixing or controlling the price or any discount, allowance or rebate relating to any goods or services to be supplied by them.
- G. The Church shall not raise funds from the public for whatever purpose without the prior approval in writing of the Registrar of Societies and

other relevant authorities.

ARTICLE XXI DISSOLUTION

- A. The Church shall not be dissolved, except with the consent of not less than three-fifths of the members of the Church for the time being resident in Singapore expressed either in person or by proxy at a general meeting convened for the purpose.
- B. In the event of the Church being dissolved as provided above, or in the event the Church ceases to be a registered charity under the Charities Act, all debts and liabilities legally incurred on behalf of the Church shall be fully discharged, and the remaining funds shall be given to charitable organizations or other churches with similar objectives in Singapore, which is(are) registered under the Charities Act, as the members of the Church may determine at the Congregational Meeting.
- C. Notice of dissolution shall be given within 7 days of the dissolution to the Registrar of Societies and the Commissioner of Charities.