

**THE CONSTITUTION OF TRINITY COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH
OF
COLORADO SPRINGS**

**Approved by Unanimous Vote of the Spiritual Council,
The Consistory,
And the Annual Congregational Meeting, February 24, 2008**

**SECTION I
Name and Object**

ARTICLE 1. The name of this congregation shall be Trinity Covenant Reformed Church of Colorado Springs.

ARTICLE 2. This church shall be an organic member of the Reformed Church in the United States and shall be governed by the Constitution, laws, and rules thereof.

ARTICLE 3. The object of this congregation is to edify its members by stated preaching of the Word of God, composed of both Old and New Testaments; the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; the provision of facilities for worship and Christian education; and the exercise of Christian discipline. The adoption, as necessary, of such measures as are in harmony with the spirit, teachings and customs of Trinity Covenant Reformed Church of Colorado Springs, as established by the Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dordt (hereinafter referred to as the Three Forms of Unity) with reference to other historic Reformed creeds, shall be deemed a proper function of this congregation.

ARTICLE 4. The doctrine of the Word of God, as set forth in the Three Forms of Unity, especially the Heidelberg Catechism, shall be the expression of faith of this congregation and its members, and these standards shall be taught at Trinity Covenant Reformed Church of Colorado Springs.

ARTICLE 5. This congregation is, and shall remain Reformed in doctrine and practice, as long as any two members shall hold to the Reformed faith as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity.

ARTICLE 6. The Word of God herein refers to the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. Because they have been kept pure in all ages, being the text underlying the King James and the New King James Versions of the Bible, they are therefore authentic (W.C.F. Ch. 1); so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal to them. Any worthy translation of these scriptures is the Word of God and profitable. To avoid confusion, the King James and the New King James Versions are the official English Versions of the Bible for Trinity Covenant Reformed Church of Colorado Springs, and are to be used for public worship and teaching, and are recommended for family Bible memorization.

**SECTION II.
Members and Their Duties**

ARTICLE 1. All baptized persons shall be members of this congregation, are under its care, shall be entitled to its rights and privileges, and are subject to its government and discipline. Communicant members are those who have been duly received into its communion by confirmation, by profession of faith, by certificate, or by renewal of profession, and have not been excluded by the process of Christian discipline.

ARTICLE 2. It is the duty of church members to live sober, righteous and godly lives, labor faithfully to bring others to Christ, obey the laws and rules prescribed in the Word of God, abide by the Constitution of the Church, contribute liberally and in proportion to their means to the support of the gospel and the extension of the kingdom of Christ, attend faithfully the public services of the Church, and to engage diligently in private devotions. Members shall recognize God's sovereignty in all areas of human endeavor and shall seek to obey the laws of the civil magistrate, the Church Constitution, and the tenets of family government insofar as they conform to the Word of God. Having examined themselves, as the Scripture demands, they should regularly partake of the Lord's Supper. Parents shall present their children at the proper time for baptism and give special attention to the Christian training of the members of their household. Parents shall especially be diligent in catechetical instruction and giving attention to the training of the members of their households in the meaning and observance of the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE 3. If a member is negligent in partaking of the Holy Communion or refuses to contribute to the support of the Church or continuously absents himself from the public worship, such conduct, in one or all of these requirements, shall be regarded as an offense against the Church and he shall be admonished by the Minister or the elders. If after admonition he continues in such negligence of duty, the Spiritual Council shall notify him that he is no longer in good and regular standing. If after not less than six months and not more than one year of suspension he continues in such neglect of duty, the Spiritual Council shall erase his name.

ARTICLE 4. Members, who, on account of change of residence or for other proper reasons, shall desire to change their membership from one congregation to another congregation of the Reformed Church in the United States or, if necessary, another orthodox Protestant Church, shall obtain a certificate of dismissal and as soon as possible shall unite with the other congregation. The Spiritual Council dismissing them shall communicate immediately the fact to the Spiritual Council of the congregation to which they have been dismissed; and, when they are received, they shall promptly notify the former of their reception. Members dismissed shall be amenable to the congregation dismissing them until the other congregation shall have received them. A certificate of dismissal shall be valid for only one year from its date.

If any member shall unite with another congregation of the Reformed Church or of another denomination without a certificate of dismissal, the Spiritual Council shall likewise erase his name.

ARTICLE 5. The voting membership of this congregation shall consist of communicant adult members who have attained the age of twenty-one, or who are married, and who also are in good and regular standing: not under any article or act of discipline that would prevent full participation in the church.

ARTICLE 6. The requirements for admission to membership by adults into the church shall consist in examination by the Spiritual Council, making an affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, as one's personal sin bearer and Lord, affirmation of their subscription to the doctrinal standards and discipline of this Church, and in the performance of the sacrament of Christian Baptism. Christian Baptism shall conform in method to the accepted standard of the Reformed faith and shall be administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Adults received into membership, who have previously received the sacrament of Christian Baptism, shall not be re-baptized. Children of members are also properly considered members of the church, though they be excluded from voting and other such privileges as the Spiritual Council shall determine, and shall receive Baptism as infants.

ARTICLE 7. Persons received into full communion with the church, by letter or certificate from another Christian congregation, shall be examined by the Spiritual Council and reaffirm their profession of faith, subscribing to the doctrinal standards and discipline of this Church, thereafter to be regarded as communicant church members. They shall be entitled to all rights and privileges of church membership as herein defined and may be deprived of such rights and privileges of membership only through the due process of discipline.

ARTICLE 8. Members baptized in infancy shall be admitted to the Lord's Table only after examination by the Spiritual Council and having attained the ability of self-examination, as required by Scripture. Covenant children, as well as those received into membership as adults, shall be instructed in the truths of the Gospel and the doctrines of the word of God as set forth in the Three Forms of Unity, including the duties of Christian stewardship.

ARTICLE 9. All members received by profession of faith, or received by letter or certificate of transfer from another Christian congregation, or Covenant Children to be received into membership as adults, shall sign indicating that the person has read and agrees to the process of church discipline outlined in the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. A copy of this signed document shall be kept with the records of the church as long as the person is a member of the congregation.

ARTICLE 10. Absence from regular worship services for a period of one year may be cause for removal from the rolls of church membership, if the Spiritual Council so decides. The Spiritual Council may grant excuse to the absent for cause of illness, military service, attendance at distant educational institution, etc. The Spiritual Council may remove a member from the rolls of the church through the process of church discipline as described in the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. Members of the Spiritual Council shall make repeated efforts, prior to erasure, to visit those who absent themselves from regular worship services.

ARTICLE 11. The Scriptures declare that no man can serve two masters; therefore, members and prospective members shall abstain from secret oaths, Masonic orders, or other conspiracies.

SECTION III **Officers and their Duties**

ARTICLE 1. The offices of this congregation shall be Minister (or Ministers), elders, deacons, a secretary, and a treasurer, whose general standard of duty shall be the Bible and the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.

ARTICLE 2. The Minister shall be a member of the church, called by Christ to the ministry of reconciliation and ordained and consecrated by prayer and the laying on of hands to preach the Gospel, to exercise pastoral oversight, to dispense the Holy Sacraments and to administer Christian discipline in conjunction with the Spiritual Council.

ARTICLE 3. It shall be the duty of the Minister to conduct the public worship of the sanctuary, to preach the gospel, to exercise pastoral oversight of the congregation, to dispense the holy sacraments, and in conjunction with the elders to administer Christian discipline. The order of worship shall include those elements of worship set forth in the Directory of Worship of the Reformed Church in the United States, pages 10-19.

ARTICLE 4. An Elder shall be a member of the church, chosen by the congregation according to the provision of this Section, a male head of household, ordained to his office by prayer and the laying on of hands, and otherwise conforming in life and conduct according to the Scriptural demands of the office. He is to assist and support the Minister in the spiritual affairs of the church. Elders are to take heed to themselves that they are an example to others. The Elders shall watch faithfully over the spiritual affairs of the congregation, maintain order in the house of God, aid in visiting the sick and contribute according to their individual abilities to the edification and consolation of all the members. The Elders shall provide elements for the Lord's Supper and aid in the distribution of the elements when so requested by the Minister or, in his absence, the Spiritual Council. The office of Elder serves the function of promoting peace and tranquility among God's people so that the Minister may oversee and feed the flock. Elders shall learn to rule well in the house of God.

ARTICLE 5. The spiritual requirements for the offices of Elder and Deacon are essential one, though the offices differ in administration. Deacons shall serve as full members of the Consistory, having particular responsibility for the care of the church facilities, and administration of the poor tithes and other diaconal ministries, including the provision for the Minister's salary under the direction of the Consistory.

ARTICLE 6. Every Elder or Deacon shall remain active as long as he is a member of Trinity Covenant Church unless for proper reasons he receives permission from the Consistory to be placed on inactive status. An inactive officer may be returned to active status by the approval of the Consistory. New Officers may be elected at any annual meeting or special meeting of the congregation, provided that the provisions of this constitution are followed.

Members called to the office of Elder or Deacon shall be of exemplary life and conduct (See Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Tim. 3:8-13), that the congregation may be edified. On this account light-minded, contentious, or otherwise improper persons shall not be chosen to these offices.

Recommendations for nominations for the offices of Elder and Deacon shall be made by writing by any confirmed member in good and regular standing to the Consistory. Nominations for the

offices of Elder and Deacon shall be made by the Consistory. Public notice of the nominations shall be given from the pulpit at least two weeks before the election. On or before the meeting for the election one additional person for each officer to be elected may be nominated by the congregation. In the case that more than one nomination is made from the congregation for any office, a vote will be taken by ballot; the person who receives a majority of ballots cast will be the nominee from the congregation. A person shall not be voted for unless regularly nominated. All nominees must be in full communion with the Church and earnestly devoted to the cause of Christ.

Every Elder or Deacon, before his ordination shall undergo a period of instruction, supervised by the Spiritual Council on the Three Forms of Unity and the constitutions of the church.

Each Elder or Deacon elect shall sustain an examination suitable to their office, in Theology, in Practica, and in the Three Forms of Unity. The Spiritual Council shall appoint the examination committee.

ARTICLE 7. The Spiritual Council shall appoint from among its members, a secretary charged with dilligently keeping the minutes of its meetings. The Consistory shall appoint from among its members, a secretary charged with diligently keeping all other records of the church, and a treasurer charged with keeping and maintaining financial and other property records of the church. The Minister or the secretary of the Consistory shall keep a complete record of all births, baptisms, confirmations, communicants, receptions by certificate, renewals of profession, dismissions, erasures of names, suspensions, excommunications, marriages, and deaths, etc. The records shall be the property of the congregation. The secretary and the treasurer may delegate portions of their stated responsibilities to another member of the congregation. There shall be a yearly audit of all records.

ARTICLE 8. The Consistory shall be composed of the Minister and other active Elders, in addition to the active Deacons, and shall have responsibility for the general oversight and government of the congregation and all of its organizations. The Consistory shall meet at least quarterly. The Minister shall serve as the President of the Consistory; but when a charge is without a Minister, or the Minister is unable to attend, the Consistory shall choose one of the Elders to preside.

ARTICLE 9. The Spiritual Council shall be composed of the Minister and active Elders and shall have original jurisdiction in matters of discipline and in all matters involving doctrine, instruction, and the spiritual life of the congregation. In all cases of discipline, the Constitution of the Reformed Church In the United States shall be followed.

ARTICLE 10. In both the Spiritual Council and the Consistory, a majority of its members present shall constitute a quorum. The Spiritual Council alone shall have the power to examine candidates for church membership, admit those examined to full communion, or excommunicate those found in error, in doctrine or life, who fail to make and evidence genuine repentance.

ARTICLE 11. The Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States has binding authority over the Consistory and Spiritual Council of Trinity Covenant Church, anything in the Constitution of this church notwithstanding.

ARTICLE 12. Further explanations of the duties of Ministers, Elders, and Deacons are described in the Directory of Worship of the Reformed Church in the United States in the Rites for Ordination and Installation. These sections are adopted as part of the Constitution for Trinity Covenant Reformed Church and are included in the Appendix below.

ARTICLE 13. Unless there are difficulties, the members of the Consistory shall constitute the Trustees. They shall be committed the care and control of the property, whether real or personal, of the congregation, and of all monies and legacies. They shall hold the property as a sacred trust for the congregation and shall keep the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the church in proper repair. The Trustees shall prevent the use of the church facilities for improper purposes and shall resist with equal fervor any attempts by civil authorities to infringe upon the sole authority of the Trustees to rule in this capacity.

ARTICLE 14. The Consistory shall elect annually two of the elders as delegates, a primarius and a secundus, to represent the charge in Classis. They shall also be the delegates to Synod whenever Synod meets in general convention. At least ten days before the annual meeting of the judicatory to which these delegates have been elected their credentials shall be sent to its Stated Clerk by the president or the secretary of the Consistory.

SECTION IV Discipline

ARTICLE 1. All members of the church are subject to its government and discipline. If minors within the church fall into sinful ways, the Spiritual Council shall remind the parents or sponsors of the wayward of their parental duties and shall also seek by direct approach to bring the disobedient back into righteousness.

ARTICLE 2. A member who continually abstains from the Lord's Table or refuses to support the church despite encouragement and visitation by Elders of the church, shall be admonished and subject to discipline.

ARTICLE 3. When any member shall unite with another congregation or church without first addressing the Spiritual Council of this church, that member shall be erased from the rolls of membership and, if circumstances warrant, shall be noted as removed from the rolls under discipline.

ARTICLE 5. All discipline shall be carried out in accordance with the provision of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.

SECTION V Election of a Minister

ARTICLE 1. When the Minister shall resign his charge or when three-fourths of the members of the Consistory shall make a written request to the Minister for his resignation, the prescribed

regulations of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be observed (Art. 30).

ARTICLE 2. When the pulpit is declared vacant, the Consistory shall be solely responsible for contacting and bringing before the congregation candidates for consideration to fill the vacancy. This duty shall be fulfilled as soon as possible.

ARTICLE 3. Each candidate shall be permitted two trial sermons. The voting members of the church shall, at the close of a candidate's ministry, cast their votes to either call or reject the candidate. After the vote is cast, both the candidate and the congregation shall be informed of the number of yea and nay votes. A majority of those present and voting shall determine whether a call is issued, or not. Voting shall be by secret ballot, supervised by the members of the Consistory.

ARTICLE 4. An election for Minister shall be held according to the prescribed regulations of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States (Art. 68).

SECTION VI

Meetings and Other Matters

ARTICLE 1. All business meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order unless contrary to this Constitution and the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. Ten percent of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for congregational meetings called according to the Constitutions.

ARTICLE 2. All voting shall be by secret ballot, if so requested by any voting member. Otherwise, voting may be by any method so selected by the acting chairman.

ARTICLE 3. All congregational meetings shall be chaired by the President of the Consistory or an Elder so designated by him. In the absence of the President, the Consistory shall choose an Elder to preside.

ARTICLE 4. A general, congregational meeting shall be held the first week in February, or within a month thereof. This meeting shall be announced to the congregation, giving at least two full weeks notice. At this congregational meeting, a full statement of financial accounts shall be presented, along with such other business as may be deemed appropriate, including an annual report of the Minister concerning his activities and the health of the church, presentation of candidates for Elder or Deacon, constitutional amendments, etc. Additional business meetings may be convened at other times, provided appropriate notice has been given. Only voting members may propose constitutional amendments, which must be made in writing to the Consistory at least four weeks before the annual meeting of the Congregation. The Minister's Report shall be part of the permanent records of the church.

BYLAWS

The Consistory may, from time to time, enact such by-laws as are deemed necessary for the conducting of normal business as the conditions and welfare of the congregation require; however, such by-laws may not contradict the Constitutions of the Church.

AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended only at a business meeting of the congregation as herein designated. Proposed amendments shall be announced at a regular worship service, at least two weeks prior to ratification. Amendments must be ratified by at least two-thirds of the voting members present and voting.

Appendix

Ministers of the Word

Pages 42-45 of the Directory of Worship of the Reformed Church in the United States.

BELOVED BROTHER IN THE LORD: You stand here in the presence of God to be publicly and solemnly ordained to the office of the holy ministry. It is proper for you, therefore, earnestly to consider the dignity and responsibility of the office, that you may enter upon it with a lively consciousness of your own sins and inadequacies and an ardent longing for divine help. The Lord himself ordained this office when he said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The apostle Paul also testifies: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come to 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."

The Lord, who has promised to be with us even unto the end of the world, has upheld this office among us to the present time; and since we are about to ordain you to this office, hear further the apostle Paul to Timothy: "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity... Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

The apostle Peter admonishes likewise: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Dear Brother, you are therefore as a servant of Christ to feed the flock of God; to preach the Word in season and out of season; to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort with all longsuffering and humility; to instruct the ignorant, to comfort the afflicted, to strengthen the weak, to seek the lost; to instruct the youth, to continue in prayer and supplication, to administer the holy sacraments, and to maintain good discipline and order in the Church of God.

Be watchful in all things; be a good soldier of Jesus Christ; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of your ministry; fight the good fight of faith: then the God of peace will be with you; and the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give you a crown of righteousness at that day.

Elders and Deacons

From the Directory of Worship, RCUS, pages 58-61

As it is a great honor to bear office in the Lord's house, so it is also a solemn trust, which no one should take upon himself rashly or lightly. For although your election has been by the free choice of your fellow members, yet the offices to which you have been called are not of human origin or authority, but were instituted by Christ himself, who preserved them in the Church to the present time. You are, therefore, to regard yourselves not the mere servants of men, but as the servants of Christ, appointed in his name and by his authority to the work entrusted to your care. From this you may see how much is comprehended in your present induction into office, and how needful it is that you should magnify your office, and make high account of its duties as a service to be rendered unto God, and not simply to men.

ELDERS are appointed to assist and support the ministers of the Word in the general government of the church. They form, with the minister, and each particular congregation, a council in common for the spiritual supervision of the flock which is committed to their care. They are bound to take part, accordingly, in the work of the ministry, so far as it has to do with this pastoral oversight and care. They are to be the advisors and counselors of the minister in the discharge of his holy office; they are to be to him as hands and eyes, acting with him and for him throughout the congregation. It is their duty to go before the flock in the way of Christian example, to watch over it in the Lord, to take an active interest in its spiritual welfare, to feel a responsibility for its condition, to be at hand in all circumstances with spiritual aid for its necessities and wants. It belongs to them, in virtue of their office, to visit the sick and afflicted, to instruct the ignorant, to admonish such as are out of the way, to warn the unruly, to command and rebuke with authority in Christ's name. To them, moreover, in conjunction with the pastor, belongs the whole discipline of the church, its power of the keys, as exercised both in the form of censure and in the form of restoration.

DEACONS are appointed to assist and support the pastor in those ministrations which pertain to the more outward needs of the general household of faith. On them falls the honorable charge of caring for the poor and needy and of seeing that the charities of the church are properly dispensed. They are to aid in securing the funds necessary for the support of the church in the various activities. They are to labor among the people in making known to them the needs of the church, fostering the principle of stewardship, and thereby cultivating the spirit of liberal and cheerful giving. In discharging these duties, however, they must not lose sight of the true spiritual character of their office, which, although it may be thus occupied with outward and temporal things, yet remains always a proper branch of the Christian ministry, the purpose of which in all things can only be the eternal salvation of men in the world to come. Hence it is that so much stress is laid, in the New Testament, on the character and life of those who are called to take part in this work. They must be men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, who may be able, both by word and example, to help forward the great purpose of the gospel, making their ministrations to the bodily necessities of the poor the occasion and means of a still better benefit to their souls. The apostle Paul, writing on this subject, in his first Epistle to Timothy, expressly requires of them the same virtues which are needful for the office of elder.