



Article 1 – Name

The name of this church is CHVRCH Newtown Square.

Article 2 – Purpose

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through: worshipping Him; equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study; proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture; encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work (local, domestic, and international); administering the ordinances of baptism and communion; encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers; serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ; and calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement about the nature of the local church.

Article 3 – Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, has been baptized, wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible, and agrees to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith.

Baptism is an act of obedience to Christ. This church believes and teaches that a believer should undergo baptism following his or her regeneration, by immersion when immersion is possible. The elders may determine, however, that a believer who has been baptized in a different manner, different timing, or both, satisfies the qualifications for membership if that believer (1) has refrained from undergoing believers' baptism on the basis of a sincere, theological, conscientious conviction and (2) agrees to submit willingly to the church's Statement of Faith. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 2 – Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission, and, at least two weeks after announcement of the recommendation of the elders, welcomed by the membership at a regular worship service and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties enumerated in this constitution, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation. Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote. No person under eighteen years of age shall be permitted to vote or hold church office.

Section 4 – Associate Membership

Students and others temporarily residing in the Newtown Square, Pa. area who are members of an evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. A letter of commendation will be sought from the applicant's home church. Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members except that when absent from the Newtown Square, Pa. area for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services; while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings they will not be eligible to stand for any office or to vote.

Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church of that termination. Associate membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in the Newtown Square, PA area.

Section 5 – On Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication.

The purpose of such discipline should be:

1. for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined;
2. for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them;
3. for the purity of the church as a whole;
4. for the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians.

Section 6 – Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death, and may do so after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders), following the procedures found in Matthew 18:15-17, upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason. Individuals may also be removed from membership for consistent and prolonged failure to attend services, despite being physically able to do so, provided that the elders have tried unsuccessfully to remediate the member's lack of attendance, warning that individual of the Biblical injunction against forsaking the gathering of the saints for worship (Hebrews 10:25).

Article 4 - Meetings

Section 1 – Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2 – Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. There shall be regular members' meetings quarterly throughout the year, at some time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership. An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present if they represent 20% of the membership. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present. A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level. At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met. Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request. Unless otherwise specified in this constitution, the most currently in-print edition of Robert's Rules of Order will be the parliamentary standard for all matters under consideration.

Article 5 – Officers

Section 1 – Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 2 – Elders

The elders shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9. Elders must affirm and teach the church's doctrinal position of credobaptism. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure. Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Scripture, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock. The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections and reviewed by the elders. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially. They may be reelected to a second three year term and may be elected to subsequent terms after a one year absence from the office (this requirement may be waived for specific cases by a 2/3 vote of the congregation at a meeting prior to the meeting at which the candidate will stand for election). An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation.

Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and I Timothy 5: 17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the position of **Lead Teaching Pastor** and other full-time or part-time paid pastoral positions. The scope and approval of job

descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member. Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons, the deaconesses, and the membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following members' meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders. The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings. For purposes of compliance, the elders shall serve as trustees of the corporation.

Section 3 – Lead Teaching Pastor

The Lead Teaching Pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation as for other elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 3. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution. In the absence or incapacity of the lead pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

Section 4 – Additional Paid Pastoral positions

The church may select men to fill additional paid full-time or part-time pastoral positions. Such men shall be elders and must therefore satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 and shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted for the full-time or part-time ministry of preaching and teaching and of providing pastoral care to those in the church. Such men's serving as an elder shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation as for other elders. Such men's selection shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 4. In the absence or incapacity of the Lead Teaching Pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), such men shall assume primary responsibility for the ministry of preaching and teaching.

Section 5– Pastoral Assistants

The elders may hire or appoint additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as pastoral assistants. The elders shall define the responsibilities of the pastoral assistant(s). They shall serve at the will of the elders for an initial term up to four years, though that term may be extended with the approval of the elders.

Section 6 – Deacons & Deaconesses

The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8–13 and Acts 6: 1–7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses. They shall be elected to a term lasting three years and may be elected to subsequent terms. They may be reelected to a second three year term and may be elected to subsequent terms after a one year absence from the office (this requirement may be waived for specific cases by a 2/3 vote of the congregation at a meeting prior to the meeting at which the candidate will stand for election.

Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration. The deacons and deaconesses shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only. The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

A finance and facility committee of the deacons will oversee the finances and facilities of the church. They shall also, in cooperation with the treasurer, develop a proposed budget annually that reflects the church's priorities for its spiritual mission, A draft of the budget will be provided to the elders for their review and approval prior to the elders' submission of the final budget to the membership.

Section 7 – Clerk & Financial Secretary

It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the pastor, the elders, the deacons, or the church. The clerk and assistant clerk shall be nominated and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the assistant clerk will act as clerk unless also unable to perform those duties, in which case the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk. The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

The financial secretary will oversee the keeping of records for the purpose of providing individuals records of their giving. These records include providing envelopes, statements of giving and other documentation as may be required by law, regulation, or the request of the elders. The financial secretary shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year.

Section 8 – Treasurer

The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, deacon, or paid church staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The treasurer shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year.

Article 6 – Elections

Section 1 – Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles: substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process; nominations should proceed with the support of the elders; all candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members; the election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2 – Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church.

At least twelve weeks prior to the members' meeting at which officers are to be elected, the elders will seek involvement and recommendations from the general membership in the nomination process for individuals to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, assistant clerk, financial secretary, treasurer, and assistant treasurer. The elders will assess those recommendations against any related Biblical qualifications, such as those in I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:6-9, and Acts 6:1-7 and will present to the congregation a list of the proposed nominees for those offices at a members' meeting at least eight weeks prior to the members' meeting at which officers are to be elected.

Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting. The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a 75% majority of all votes cast for the office of elder. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority

of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

Section 3 – Selection of the Lead Teaching Pastor

In the selection of any man to this position, the same basic process of selecting an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential Lead Teaching Pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and selected as Lead Teaching Pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Section 4 – Selection of men to Additional Paid Pastoral positions

In the selection of any man to an Additional Paid Pastoral position, the same basic process of selecting an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential individual and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith. Notice of the nomination of a man to be selected for such a position (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Article 7 – Indemnification

Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted, in good faith, with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

Section 3 – Procedure

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

Article 8 – Dispute Resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18: 15–20, I Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

Article 9 – Amendments

The Statement of Faith may be amended (or adopted) by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at a previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at a previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the church clerk.

In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets shall be divided among its members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated by corporate vote prior to dissolution to such other non-profit religious organizations as are in agreement with the doctrinal statement of this church and in conformity with the requirements of US IRS Codes and other applicable laws and regulations.

This constitution and any associated bylaws, as adopted, supersedes all previous versions in existence as of the date of its adoption.

Article 10 – Our Statement of Faith

We accept the scriptures as our only authority in matters of faith and practice and our interpretation of Bible doctrine leads us inexorably to believe:

We believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as being verbally inspired by God and inerrant and infallible in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority. The primary message of the scriptures is the glory of God in Christ.

We believe in one God eternally existing in one essence, yet co-equal persons, the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by God, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to the virgin Mary.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He gives and sustains the spiritual life of the believer and He empowers the preaching and teaching of the Gospel.

We believe that God directly created Adam and Eve, the historical parents of the entire human race; and that they were created in His own image, distinct from all other living creatures, in a state of original righteousness, sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God, and that human beings are born with a sinful nature.

We believe that human life, sexual identity and roles are aspects of God's creative design. From creation, marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman that should be marked by sexual purity, by sacrificial male leadership, and by recognizing the divine blessing of children, including pre-born children.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified by grace on the basis of His shed blood.

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, His ascension into heaven and His present life there as High Priest and Advocate for us.

We believe in the blessed hope, which is the personal, visible and future return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit, united to Christ and thereby become sons and daughters of God and heirs of eternal life.

We believe in the existence of a personal devil, who is still working in the world to destroy the souls of men; and that he and all his angels and all who do not receive Christ as their personal Savior will eternally perish in the lake of fire.

We believe in the Church, whose mission it is to preach the Scriptures to all the world, all of its endeavors being guided by multiple leadership and supported by the wise stewardship of God's people.

We believe that the ordinances of the Church, given by the Lord, are Baptism and the Lord's Table (Communion).