

West Cohasset Chapel Constitution

Preamble

We, the group of Christian believers known as West Cohasset Chapel, and incorporated under this name, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Article I

The name of this organization shall be the West Cohasset Chapel, 24650 State Hwy 6, Cohasset, Minnesota 55721.

Article II

Our existence as a church is to glorify God, equip God's people to model Christ and to see God establish a church convinced by Christ's message, committed to prayer, continuous in fellowship and compelled to connect people to the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall seek this end through evangelizing unbelievers, encouraging believers in their personal faith, fellowship and service. Our focus will always be to exalt God's name and His Word. (Matthew 28:18-20, Psalm 138:2)

To implement this purpose legally, the church is incorporated under the laws of the state of Minnesota, so that it may own, provide, and/or maintain a place of worship (including real estate and buildings), receive, hold, and disperse gifts, bequest funds, and/or sundry things necessary or incident to carry on such purposes.

Article III

The articles of faith and teaching of this church are as follows:

1. We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments alone are verbally inspired of God and are without error in the original writings and we believe they are the only authority in the matter of faith, daily life, and final destiny. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Peter 1:22-23.
2. We believe in one God eternally existing in three persons, namely: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 3:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; Genesis 1:1-2; John 1:1-3.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of Mary when she was still virgin, and that He is true God and true man. Luke 1:1-35; John 14:7-11; 10:30; 1 John 5:20.
4. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. John 16:8-11; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 4:30.

We believe that He is the divine teacher who guides believers into all truth; and that it is the design of God for each believer to be filled and led by the Spirit.

John 16:13; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 8:14.

We believe that God, by His Spirit, is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; that He calls and equips individual believers for leadership and service; and that His indwelling presence produces Christlikeness in each believer.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:7-12; Galatians 5:22-23.

5. We believe that man was created by God from the dust of the earth in God's image; but that when Adam sinned, death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. As a result of Adam's sin, all men are born with a sinful nature which makes them sinners in thought, word, and deed. Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; Romans 5:12; 3:23; Job 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:20.

6. We believe that the only escape from the penalty and power of sin is to receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith; He, who alone is our sacrifice and substitute- having suffered the wrath of God for us and whose blood cleanses us from all sin. John 1:29; Hebrews 9:26; 1 John 1:7; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Luke 13:3; Ephesians 2:8-9.

7. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of Jesus Christ, and His ascension into heaven, where He is now seated at the Father's right hand, as our only high priest and intercessor. John 20:24-29; 1 Peter 3:21-22; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

8. We believe, according to the word of God, in the blessed hope, which is the personal, visible, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13; John 14:3; 1 Corinthians 15:22-24.

9. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who died and rose for them, become children of God, being born again by the Holy Spirit; and that such have eternal life, and shall never perish. We also believe that all such are members of the true church, or the body of Jesus Christ which knows no bound of denomination or sect. John 1:11-13; 3:5-6; 5:24; Ephesians 1:13-14; John 10:27-29; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:4-6; 5:25-27; Romans 8:38-39.

10. We believe that the Scriptures teach that all believers are to be baptized by water, and we preach and practice immersion. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 2:41-42; 8:36-38.

11. We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance given for believers only, to be remembered until He comes. It serves as a proclamation of His death, a reminder of our gathering together unto Him; it symbolizes the fact that an abiding fellowship in the Lord Jesus Christ can only be maintained by self-examination and confession of sin; it pictures our need of constantly partaking of Christ for spiritual sustenance; it bespeaks a unity of the body of Christ, the Church. 1 Corinthians 11:24-26; 10:16-17; Matthew 26:26-29.

12. We believe that sanctification is threefold: first, that our standing in Christ is now perfect (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 10:10-14); second, that our daily walk is imperfect, but we must endeavor to grow in grace (2 Corinthians 7:11; 2 Peter 3:18; Philippians 3:10-12); third, that we shall all be made perfect like Christ when we shall see Him face to face (1 John 3:2; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

13. We believe that the heathen, even though they have never heard the Gospel, are still lost and that it is the tremendous responsibility of every child of God to do all he can to see that they hear the Gospel which alone can save. Romans 1:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; John 3:18; 14:6; Acts 4:12.

14. We believe that all who have been saved by faith in Jesus Christ shall be raised from the dead into everlasting blessedness; and that all others shall be raised

from the dead into everlasting, conscious punishment in hell. 1Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15.

Article IV

MEMBERSHIP:

Section 1 - Qualification for Membership

Any persons who have attended regularly for three months may be admitted into membership in this church, if they:

- a. Accept the articles of faith of the constitution of this church.
- b. Have completed *The Basics- Becoming a Member of WCC* class.
- c. Have given public testimony, before the congregation, of their faith in Jesus Christ by an arrangement suitable for the individual candidate as determined by the Elders.
- d. Are not a member of a lodge or secret fraternal organization.
- e. Have been examined to the satisfaction of the Elders.

Section 2 - Receiving Members

As many as have been duly examined by the Elders, and have fulfilled the qualifications for membership under Article IV, Section 1, shall be received into membership by the approval of the Elders.

The names of proposed members shall be posted one week before and after the individual has given public testimony of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to give opportunity for the voicing of any objections to the admission of the candidate as a member.

Section 3 - Responsibilities of Membership

The responsibilities of the church membership are summarized in the church covenant as follows:

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we do now in the presence of God and this church most solemnly and joyfully enter this Covenant with one another as one body in Christ. We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit:

- a. To exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in all our activities and relationships. (Galatians 5:19-26)
- b. To endeavor by all that we do, say, or think to be devoted to prayer, watchfulness, thankfulness, wisdom and grace so that "You may know how to answer everyone." (1 Peter 3:15-16; Colossians 3:17, 23-24)
- c. To walk together in Christian love, purity, and unity so that the outside world will know we are committed followers of Jesus Christ. (John 13:34-35, Colossians 3)
- d. To submit to and pray for the leadership. (Hebrews 13:17-18)
- e. To serve the family of believers with God's gifting. (1 Peter 4:10-11)
- f. To contribute, as the Lord directs, to the financial support of the church, the relief of the needy, and the evangelism of all people.

(1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 9)

g. To seek God's kingdom first through regular Bible reading, prayer, regular public worship, fellowship, and service. (Matthew 6:33)

h. To strive by example, through prayer, with friends, neighbors, and work associates to a personal faith in Jesus Christ. (Colossians 4:2-6)

Section 4 - Termination of Membership

Members are dismissed from this church by:

- a. Their request.
- b. Being received into membership of another church without letter of dismissal from this church; or
- c. Removal, when there is persistent repetition of conduct unbecoming to professing Christians, after faithful effort has been made to restore fellowship; or
- d. Removal, when any member has shown no interest in the work of this church during the period of one year, after faithful effort has been made to revive such interest; or
- e. Removal, when there has been at any time a change in his position doctrinally to put him in conflict with the constitution of this church.
- f. Members shall not be dismissed by removal except upon recommendations of the Elders and vote of the congregation.
- g. Physical Death

Section 5 - Inactive Members

Any member absenting himself habitually from formal church gatherings without valid reason and due notification to the secretary shall be placed on an inactive membership. Restoration may be made through Elder Board approval. Inactive members shall not have voting rights.

Section 6 - Discipline

- a. In cases of personal offenses, the procedure shall be in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18.
- b. In cases which affect the church in general, the first attempt shall be to restore the offender (Galatians 6:1). If the offender does not humble himself in the matter, the church shall precede in accordance with 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Timothy 5:20. In case of heresy, the rule shall be as in Titus 3:10-11.
- c. In case of heresy, the rule shall be as in Titus 3:10-11.

Article V

GOVERNMENT:

The government of this church, under the authority of God's word and by the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is vested in the body of believers who compose it, whose majority vote, except as otherwise indicated in these by-laws, shall be final.

The immediate direction of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church shall be committed to the elected officers during their term of office. The church receives the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible guide in matters of faith, church order and discipline, and is amenable to no other ecclesiastical body.

Article VI

OFFICERS:

All persons who hold any position of leadership (including but not limited to teachers, committee members, and church staff) must meet and maintain the following spiritual qualifications for leadership.

Qualifications:

- a. Has accepted Jesus Christ as his/her personal Savior.
- b. Is a member of West Cohasset Chapel.
- c. Provides robustly spiritual, financial, and physical involvement to WCC ministries.
- d. Is known for a life lived in full devotion to Jesus Christ. He/ she will purpose to put any sin, including doubtful conduct and conversation, in order that their influence is helpful and not a hindrance.
- e. He/ she will fulfill such specific Biblical requirements that may apply to the position of responsibility.
- f. No officer of WCC or committee chair shall be a member of a lodge or secret fraternal organization.

Section 1

- a. The officers of the church shall consist of the Board of Elders (not less than five men), a Board of Deacons/Deaconesses (not less than five men/women), a Congregational Secretary and Church Treasurer. All officers shall hold membership in the church and shall subscribe in writing annually to the Doctrinal Statement as set forth in Article III.
- b. The Board of Elders by its discretion and recommendation with congregational approval may increase or decrease the membership of committees. The Board of Elders may establish or eliminate committees as needs arise and as needs are no longer evident.

Section 2 - Election of Officers

- a. The Elders and Deacons/Deaconesses shall be selected by the Nominating Committee and elected by a majority vote of the convened members in the Annual Congregational Meeting for a period of up to three years on a rotating basis.
 1. A Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Board Secretary, shall be elected by each respective board at the first regular meeting after the Annual Meeting of the church.
 2. The term of all officers shall begin and end after their successors have been duly elected.
 3. Should the office of a board member become vacant before the expiration of his/her term of office, his/her successor shall be appointed by the Elders until the next Annual Meeting at which time his/her successor shall be elected for the remainder of the term.
- b. The Congregational Secretary and Church Treasurer shall also be elected by the majority vote at the Annual Congregational Meeting. The Church Treasurer shall be elected for a term of two years.

Section 3 - The Election of Pastor

- a. The pastor shall be recommended to the church by a 3/4 vote of the elders and elected in a congregational meeting of the church.
- b. At time of election, a 3/4 majority vote of the convened qualified voters shall be required to call a pastor. Said meeting shall have been expressly called for this purpose.
- c. The termination of the pastor's service may be affected at any time by the same order of procedure as is prescribed for his election and call. The pastor and his wife shall not vote in his termination.

Section 4- The Church Boards

- a. The Elder Board (comprised of the pastor and elders) shall be responsible for the administration of the church under the authority of God's word by the leadership of the Holy Spirit under the guidelines of this constitution.
- b. The Deacons/Deaconesses shall be directly responsible to the Elders and shall serve under their authority as scriptural overseers and under-shepherds. As such they shall be empowered to conduct business on behalf of the church as outlined in Section 6, Deacons/Deaconesses.
- c. Any member of a church board who becomes an offense to the church and its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his/her covenant vows, or misdemeanor in office or by willfully promoting division or discord in the church may be censured, reprimanded, or excluded from membership by the Elder Board.
- d. Regular meetings of the Elder and Deacon/Deaconess Boards shall be held monthly and special meetings may be called by the chairman when and as they are needed. By mutual agreement of all members, a meeting may be postponed.
- e. All employees, salaried or otherwise, shall be directly responsible to the Elders.
- f. The Deacon/Deaconess Board and Elder Board shall review and approve by majority of each Board any contract that would obligate the church to an indebtedness of \$5000.00 or more. This contract must then be approved by 2/3 of members present at a congregational meeting. Signers of the contract shall be Elder Chairman, Deacon/Deaconess Chairman, and Church Treasurer.
- g. If any Elder or Deacon/Deaconess shall absent himself/herself from 3 regular meetings of the Board without presenting a reasonable excuse to the Chairman of his/her respective Board, his/her name shall be removed from the Board.
- h. Two-thirds of the Elders or Deacons/Deaconesses must be present to form a quorum and two-thirds majority vote is needed to carry a motion.

Section 5 - Duties of Church Officers

Pastor:

- a. The pastor shall be a minister of the Gospel whose personal life shall conform to the qualification laid down in Acts 6:1-4 , 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:7-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4.
 1. He is to give himself to prayer and the study of the Word of God.

2. To preach and expound on the Word of God.
3. Administer the Ordinances in accordance with the Word of God.
4. Share in the pastoral care of the congregation along with the other elders and members of other committees.
5. Perform the marriage ceremony at his discretion in accordance with the laws of God, WCC's understanding of marriage, and the state of Minnesota.
6. Officiate at funerals of members of WCC and non-members at the leadership's discretion.
7. Together with the other elders maintain church discipline.
8. Act as ex-officio member of all committees and boards.
9. Perform other constitutional, Scriptural, and general pastoral duties.
10. He shall be directly responsible to the elders.

b. The vacation schedule for the pastor(s) shall be as follows:

- During year one: Two weeks, including two Sundays;
- During years 2-3: Three weeks, including three Sundays;
- During years 4-5: Four weeks, including four Sundays;
- During year 6: Five weeks, including five Sundays;
- During year 7: Three-month sabbatical, plus two weeks vacation including two Sundays; if full sabbatical is not taken, the pastors vacation will be adjusted by the Elder Board;
- During year 8 and beyond: Five weeks, including five Sundays;
- During Year 14, etc.: Three-month sabbatical, plus two weeks vacation including two Sundays; if full sabbatical is not taken, the pastors vacation will be adjusted by the Elder Board;

Before being granted a sabbatical, the pastor(s) must submit a written sabbatical application to the elders. This application will outline what his plans are for the sabbatical and how it will enhance his future performance as pastor. Upon elder approval, the pastor(s) is entitled to a three-month, full-pay sabbatical.

- c. The pastor shall be entitled to be away for other preaching engagements for four additional Sundays during the year. The pastor shall pay for pulpit supply for these Sundays.
- d. The pastor and his family shall automatically become members of the congregation upon completion of the membership application form. Termination of membership shall coincide with termination of ministry.
- e. The pastor(s) shall be strongly encouraged to take a minimum of five continuing education days per year with additional days upon approval of the Elder Board.

Elders:

To be devoted to prayer and the study of God's word, and sustain a caring ministry for the flock which involves:

- a. Serving as partners with the pastor for WCC's growth
- b. Praying for the sick and the pastoral care of the congregation including, but not limited to, visitation.

- c. To teach and exhort as well as refute those who contradict the truth which involves:
 - 1. Insuring that instructors, Bible study leaders, and Youth leaders are properly qualified
 - 2. Arranging for pulpit supply in the pastor's absence.
- d. To lead by Christ-like example, this involves:
 - 1. Consistently modeling spiritual character, attitudes, values, and behavior among the members.
 - 2. Providing and inviting the opportunity for frequent and on going contact with members.
- e. Conducting the affairs of the church in an atmosphere of openness and mutually sensitivity, focusing as much on nurturing the members as on decision making.
- f. Accepting mutual accountability as the norm for pastor and elders.
- g. To oversee the affairs of the church, this involves:
 - 1. Approving all applicants for church membership.
 - 2. Maintaining the legal status of the church.
 - 3. Installing the duly elected pastor.
- h. To give thoughtful and prayerful consideration to any charges that are brought against a member. To investigate thoroughly all cases and hear testimony from all parties involved before bringing the report to the church for action.
- i. In the absence of the pastor, they are to provide leadership for prayer meetings and a pulpit supply on the Lords day, and to welcome and introduce guest speakers at these or similar services. In the event of the pastor's resignation or death, the elders shall have charge of the prayer meetings and shall be responsible for the pulpit supply.
- j. The Elders shall determine the amount of honorarium for all guest speakers in conjunction with the Deacons/Deaconesses.

- k. The elders shall meet the qualifications as stipulated in I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 6:1-4.

Deacons/Deaconesses:

- a. Under the direction of the Elders they shall exercise care, oversight, and maintenance of the property of the church and entire facility and grounds. They shall also have direct responsibility for the benevolence, maintenance, and building budgets, and general oversight of finances.
- b. They shall administer to the needs of the saints as they arise, including financial assistance, love gifts, work projects, and care for orphans and widows.
- c. They shall adhere to the Deacon/Deaconess position description.
- d. They shall present to the Elders their annual goals with appropriate details of fiscal projections, timelines, etc.

Treasurer:

- a. The Church Treasurer shall be responsible for the finances of the church. It shall be the Treasurer's duty, as authorized, to receive and disburse all church

moneys.

b. An accounting of finances shall be provided:

1. Monthly to the Elder and Deacon/Deaconess Boards
2. Monthly to the congregation
3. Annually to the congregation

c. The Treasurer shall submit the books at any time for auditing and turn over to the Board as directed by them (or to his or her successor when elected) all moneys, documents and papers belonging to the church.

Congregational Secretary:

a. The Congregational Secretary shall keep a faithful register of the membership; record all business proceedings of the church, and promptly issue all letters of dismissal when granted or required.

b. Shall give the board and all organizations notice one month preceding the Annual Meeting that they are to make their reports at said meeting.

c. Shall provide notice to all members of the congregation of any special or annual meeting as in accordance with these by-laws.

d. Shall have available at all times copies of the constitution of this church, all documents, and keep all records, files, or other papers belonging to the church up to date.

e. Assist the treasurer in the counting and recording of all moneys received in the offerings of the church and act as an assistant to the treasurer, understanding the financial transactions of the church.

Article VII

Section 1 - Church Year

The church fiscal year shall end September 30.

Section 2 - Annual Report

Final and complete reports from the Church Secretary, Treasurer, Board and committees within the church shall be made and presented for approval at the Annual Meeting in October. Said reports shall be in the hand of the Church Secretary one week in advance of the meeting for printing and distribution at said meeting.

Article VIII

Section 1 - Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the church shall be held on a day in October decided on by the Elder Board.

Section 2 - Quorum

A quorum for the transaction of business of all congregational meetings shall consist of 30% of the voting membership of the church. Only members who have attained the age of 18 years and upward shall be eligible to vote at any of the business meetings.

Section 3 - Congregational Meetings

a. Any meeting of the congregation may be constituted a meeting for the

transaction of business, providing announcement of said meeting is given from the pulpit and publicly posted on two Sundays preceding said meeting.

b. Any meeting of the congregation may be called at any time by the pastor, the Elder Board, or upon the written request of 10% of the members who are eligible to vote.

c. In all congregational meetings, the Chairman of the Elder Board shall preside and, in his absence, the Vice-Chairman or Secretary of the Elder Board in that order of availability.

d. In the transaction of business in all congregational meetings, "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be used in all cases not covered by the constitution.

Article IX

ORDINANCES:

Christians are enjoined to observe two ordinances - baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are to be observed as remembrances of His death, burial, resurrection, and coming again. They are not a means of grace toward salvation.

Section 1 - The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated as frequently as the Elders shall direct

Section 2 - Baptism

Baptism shall be administered only upon the recommendation of the pastor or the Elders, after due examination, the mode being by immersion.

Article X

ORDINATION:

Spirit-filled men may be called out from among us to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God. Such men may be given a commission to preach and administer the ordinances by an ordination council composed of the pastor, the Elder Board, and such pastors and lay delegates as they may invite to participate.

The ordaining council shall thoroughly examine by written work, conversation, and examination of giftedness of all applicants for ordination as to their call to the ministry. Having satisfied themselves in these particulars, and in the individual's theology they shall recommend the candidate to the church for ordination.

Article XI

COMMITTEES - SELECTED BY THE CHURCH BOARD

All people being nominated for committees/ministries, organized by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Elder Board, not needing to be elected at the Annual Business Meeting, are responsible to the Elder Board.

Section 1 - Missionary Committee

The Missionary Committee shall be responsible for carrying out the Missions Policy of this church.

Section 2 - Christian Education Committee

- a. The Christian Education Committee shall consist of representatives of each educational ministry of the church.
- b. The Christian Education Committee shall be responsible for carrying out the Christian Education Policy of this church.

Section 3 - The Nominating Committee

- a. During the month of May, the Nominating Committee and its Chairman shall be selected by the Elder Board. The Nominating Committee shall be chosen from the congregation as follows: two Elder Board members and three members from the congregation.
- b. There shall be added to this committee one additional member from the congregation for each 50 members in the membership, up to a total of seven members.
- c. The committee shall thoroughly investigate the character, qualifications and capability of every ministry leader. No ministry leader shall be considered unless agreed on by a 2/3 majority of the committee, and in entire agreement with every particular of the church constitution.
- d. The committee shall forward their results to the Office Secretary so that the names of candidates for each vacancy being filled may be posted on the church bulletin board by August 18 (for 2 weeks) so that new ministry leaders and team members may begin serving on September 1.
- e. Nominations from the floor will not be permitted. Suggested names for the Nominating Committee's consideration may be submitted to them, at a minimum, one month prior to the committee's first meeting.
- f. The Nominating Committee shall appoint the ministries and persons of West Cohasset Chapel, except those stated in Article XI.
- g. The Nominating Committee may enlist the help of the Office Secretary to gather information. However, it is the duty of this committee to make the contact and do the correspondence to complete their task.

Section 4 - Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for carrying out the Personnel Policy of West Cohasset Chapel.

Article XII

FINANCES:

- a. All money received by the church shall be by free-will offerings.
- b. The use of envelopes (for offering) is encouraged with the name of the giver so as to assist the treasurer in acknowledgment of the same by receipt. Believers are encouraged to give proportionately and regularly, as unto the Lord, for the support of the Lord's work, stewardship being an indication of unselfish love for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. Visiting speakers shall be approved by the Board of Elders. The sum of money

paid speakers, and the funds from which speakers will be paid, shall be determined by the purpose of their visit.

Article XIII

AMENDMENTS:

Any proposed alteration or amendment to this constitution must be presented in writing at a congregational meeting, and the vote on such amendment is not to be earlier than one month from the date of its presentation. Three-fourths of all the votes cast shall be necessary for its adoption. The notice of such proposed amendment shall be posted in the vestibule of the church from the time of its presentation until the meeting at which action is to be taken. The posted notice shall also specify the date of the business meeting at which the vote on the proposed amendment is to be taken.

Article III of this constitution, which gives the doctrinal basis of the church and this particular section limiting its amendment shall not be subject to amending except upon three fourths voting of all votes cast by members present at a Congregational Meeting.

Article XIV

DISSOLUTION:

Upon the dissolution of the Corporation, the Trustees shall, after paying or making provision for the payment, of all of the liabilities of the Corporation, dispose of all the assets of the Corporation in such a manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of an future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Trustees shall determine.

Article XV

When WCC members approach matters concerning its constitution, we pray that the love of Christ guard our attitudes toward one another so that we exhibit a genuine concern for the care and building up of all of God's people in an atmosphere of love.

Appendix

Constitutional Clarification Committee
Communication of Conclusions
October 14, 2018

Our assignment:

Clarification of the highlighted and italicized phrases below from the West Cohasset Chapel Church Constitution, specifically as they relate to the ministries of the Elder Board.

- A) **Article V, GOVERNMENT, 2nd paragraph:** *“The immediate direction of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church* shall be committed to the elected officers during their term of office...”

- B) **Article VI, OFFICERS, Section 4 The Church Boards, a.:** “The Elder Board (comprised of pastor and elders) *shall be responsible for the administration of the church* under the authority of God’s word by the leadership of the Holy Spirit under the guidelines of this constitution.”

Our response:

This committee concluded that we have historically held to a Congregational rule with an elder shepherding/leadership form of government.

- 1) “The immediate direction of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church” along with being “responsible for the administration of the church,” involve the day to day shepherding of this local body of believers.

- 2) We understand that the membership, along with the elders of the church, bears responsibility in the decision making process in matters which may include:
 - a. A majority of congregational involvement
 - b. A substantial amount of financial commitment
 - c. Constitutional changes
 - d. New initiatives
 - e. Long-term vision

In such instances, church leadership will communicate to the membership, allowing and seeking input from the body as a whole for further consideration, discussion and decision. A membership vote is needed to decide if the matter under consideration will be carried out.

- 3) It is recognized that the church membership has an active involvement and responsibility in the selection of Elders and other elected officers in the church.

This takes place through the nominating committee selection of Church Elders/Officers, followed by the membership vote which puts (or does not put) suggested Elders/Officers in their positions of service.

- 4) In all of this, trust, humility, communication, submission, sensitivity and unmeasured amounts of God's grace are among the necessary ingredients for a healthy Elder and member relationship.

It is our desire to follow the scriptural model, instruction and example in the healthy relationship God intends between church leadership and the body as a whole which makes up the local church.

Acts 20:28 (The Apostle Paul's exhortation to the elders of the church at Ephesus)

"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

I Peter 5:1-4 (The Apostle Peter's instruction to church elders)

"The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."

Colossians 1:15-18 (The Apostle Paul's declaration concerning Christ and instruction to believers)

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."

As those whose faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ, having been saved by His grace and given a righteousness we could never achieve, it is fundamental to affirm that He is the Head of this church. He holds all authority over His Church, both local and global.

Therefore, our interest as the family of God is to exalt, obey and proclaim Jesus Christ through our worship, our service, our obedience and practice together as a congregation.

Consequently, our interest here is not who holds the “power” or “control” in the life of the church. This matter has already been clearly settled. Our interest and continuous hope is that by the power of the Holy Spirit operating in the lives of God’s people, the whole church has as its primary question and concern in every area of her life, “What does Christ our King want?” and/or “What does the Word of God say about this?”

- 5) We acknowledge the desired and fitting relational leadership which is one of the stated responsibilities for those serving as elders as expressed in the West Cohasset Chapel church constitution:

**(Article VI OFFICERS, Section 5 Duties of Church Officers, Elders, ...letter e)
Elders: (duties) “To be devoted to prayer and the study of God’s word, and sustain a caring ministry for the flock which involves... (e) Conducting the affairs of the church in an atmosphere of openness and mutual sensitivity, focusing as much on nurturing the members as on decision making.”**

Constitutional Clarification Committee
Fall 2018

Dale Adams, Brian Anderson, Joe Franzone, Dale Geisler, Jerry Hanson, Jim Taylor

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