

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS  
OF  
St. Paul's Reformed Church  
Of Cessna, (Bedford County), Pennsylvania

THE CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We, the members of St. Paul's Reformed Church, 5543 Business 220, Bedford, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit.

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of the organization shall be St. Paul's Reformed Church.

ARTICLE II

OBJECT

The object of this Church is the glorification of God in the salvation of souls, the edification of born-again believers through the teaching of God's Holy Word – the Bible, the promotion of Godly worship, the worldwide proclamation of God's saving grace expressed in the shed blood and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary and His bodily resurrection; the preservation of a pure church free from apostasy and compromise, and the earnest defense of "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," until the Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

ARTICLE III

DOCTRINE

SECTION I. Articles of Faith. We accept the Authorized King James Version as an authoritative translation of the Scriptures and affirm belief in the Christian doctrines as expressed therein and in the historic Christian doctrines as contained in the Apostle's Creed and declare these to be:

A. The Holy Scriptures. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired of God and inerrant in the original writing, and that they are of supreme and final authority in all matters of doctrine, faith and life. – (II Peter 1:21; II Timothy 3:16-17)

B. The Godhead. We believe in one God eternally existing in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. – (Gen. 1:1; Col. 2:9; John 10:30; Matt 28:19)

C. The Virgin Birth. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary and is true God and true man.-(Isa. 7:14; Matt.1:18-23; I Tim.3:16)

D. Man. We believe that man was created in the image of God, and that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in word and thought and deed. – (Gen. 1:27; 2:17; Rom. 5:12-21; 3:23; 6:23; I Cor. 15:22; 2:14; Psalm 51:5; Jer. 17:9)

E. The Person and Work of Christ.

1. 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 on the ground of His shed blood. – (Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 4:1-7, 25; Gal. 2:16; Titus 3:5)

2. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and in His present life there for us as High Priest, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Luke 24:1-43; Acts 2:24-33; Heb. 7:25; I John 2:1; Rom. 8:11; Phil. 3:20-21)

3. We believe in the blessed hope, and the personal, bodily, visible, pre-millennial and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ to set up in the earth a kingdom in which He shall reign in righteousness and peace. – (II Thess. 1:7-10; I Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-11; Jude 14-15; Rev. 20; Acts 1:9-11; Isa. 9:6-7; 65:17-21; 11:6-9; Micah 4:3-4; Hosea 2:18)

F. Salvation. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and preserved unto the day of redemption. – (John 3:3-8; 10:28; I Peter 1:23; Rom. 8:35-39; Eph. 1:11-14)

G. Ordinances. We believe Jesus Christ instituted two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that for the believer, baptism by immersion or sprinkling is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, signifies and seals our engrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's, and that the children of believing parents are to be baptized as an act by the parents of their dedication of them to Christ. We believe Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper to commemorate His death until He comes again. – (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38-39; I Cor. 11:23-26)

H. The Eternal State of the Saved and Unsaved. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust; the everlasting blessedness of the saved and in conscious everlasting punishment for the lost. – (John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:4-5; Dan. 12:2; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-31)

I. Separation. We believe that all the saved are called into a life of separation from all worldly and sinful practices and from apostasy, and are under obligation to all the world by life and word to the truth and proclamation of the Gospel. – (Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 5:14-18; Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:14-16; II Cor. 6:14-18; II Tim.3:1-5; II John 9-11; Rev. 18:1-5)

J. The Personality of Satan. We believe in the reality and personality of Satan. – (Job 1:8-9; John 8:21-45; I Peter 5:8; II Cor.2:11)

K. The Church. We believe that the church in its invisible form is universal, the true body and bride of Christ and that all who are born again are members regardless of organizational affiliation. – (Eph.1:22-23; 5:21-23; Matt 28:19; I Cor. 12:13)

L. The Local Church. We believe in the autonomy of the local church to determine its own doctrinal position and in the responsibility to uphold these doctrines and practice. (Matt 16:19; Acts 20:17-35; I Cor. 5; 6:1-5)

#### M. Marriage

1. We, as a church body, affirm that God has ordained and established marriage to be between one man and one woman. We affirm that God’s design for marriage is for life. We also affirm that God has ordained marriage as the only proper and legitimate place for sexually intimacy and expression. (Genesis 2:18,23,24; Exodus 20:14; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 108, 109)

2. We recognize any sexual relationship outside of the bonds of marriage as sinful. These include, but are not limited to: premarital sexual relations, extramarital sexual relations, homosexuality, pornography, bestiality, polygamy and pedophilia. We also see any effort to reassign or redefine the gender of birth as sinful. However, we see all of these sins as forgivable through Christ and believe that repentance of sin and faith in Christ should be preached to those under such sin. (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Romans 1:26-28)

3. We shall have no hatred toward anyone because of their sinful sexual choices. We recognize them as sinners just as we were and continue to be, and would remain condemned for our sins had it not been for the grace of God made manifest to us in Christ Jesus. We have concern for all who are living in sexually permissive lifestyles, as their disregard for the law of God puts their soul in peril. (Exodus 20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10)

N. Human Life. We believe that human life begins at conception and precious in the sight of God. As such, abortion and euthanasia/assisted suicide are violations of God’s command “You shall not murder.” – (Exodus 20:13; Psalm 139:13-14)

SECTION 2. In subscribing to these Articles of Faith we by no means set aside, or undervalue, and of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, all of which we believe to be God’s own written Word, given to us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but the knowledge and belief of the truth as stated in our Articles of Faith we deem necessary to sound doctrine and therefore requisite for Christian fellowship.

SECTION 3. The provisions of Article III shall be considered as fundamental, the basis upon which this Church is founded, and shall only be amended under serious consideration and with much prayer and wise counsel. All such amendments to Article III must be in accord with the Reformed heritage of St. Paul’s Reformed Church.

## ARTICLE IV

## Membership

SECTION 1. Application. Any person desiring to unite with this Church shall make application for such purpose to the Pastor or a member of the Consistory. Such applicant shall agree to be bound by the Constitution and By-Laws of this Church and the applicant's personal acceptance shall be voted upon by the Consistory at one its meetings as described in the By-Laws.

SECTION 2. Profession or Reaffirmation. Any person desiring to unite with this Church upon profession of Faith or by Reaffirmation shall present himself for membership as provided for in Section 1 hereof. The Pastor or Consistory shall then fix a time and place for a meeting with the applicant, who shall attend and be examined by the Consistory as to his assurance of salvation, doctrinal belief, and Christian experience.

SECTION 3. Letter. Any person desiring to unite with this church upon Letter of Recommendation or Letter of Transfer from another church, shall present such letter in person to the Pastor or member of the Consistory for membership as provided for in Section 1 hereof, and shall be examined concerning his assurance of salvation, doctrinal belief, and Christian experience by the Pastor and member or members of the Consistory.

SECTION 4. Confirmation. Baptized persons who have completed the prescribed course of Heidelberg Catechetical instruction, shall, upon profession of Faith in Christ and upon recommendations of the instructor, be considered by the Consistory for membership in the Church.

SECTION 5. Invalids. An invalid who is unable to attend the public services may be granted membership in this Church. Such applicant for membership shall be interviewed by the Pastor and one or more members of the Consistory as to his assurance of salvation, doctrinal belief, and Christian experience. Upon their recommendation the Consistory shall vote upon his application.

SECTION 6. Procedure in Accepting New Members.

A. When the Consistory is satisfied that an applicant is a Christian and has met the requirements for membership as provided in Article IV, Section 1-5 of this Constitution, the Consistory may then accept such person as a member of this Church, provided that such action by the Consistory shall be by two-thirds vote, a quorum being present, at the particular Consistory meeting.

B. A new member, having complied with Sections 1-5 of Article IV, shall be publicly welcomed at a regular Lord's Day Service by the members of the church.

C. The following Covenant shall be used for the purpose of publicly welcoming new members into the congregation:

The Pastor shall propose to the new member or members, in the presence of the congregation, the following questions, and as the new member(s) to respond in the affirmative if they agree:

1. Do you receive the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Have you experienced that you were a condemned and helpless sinner, and, so far as you know your heart, have you believed in Christ as an all-sufficient Savior, realizing that God, for Christ's sake, has pardoned your sins?

3. Will you earnestly strive to avoid the follies and vices of this world, to increase in knowledge, to grow in grace, and to live henceforth for Christ?

4. Do you sincerely agree to be bound by the Constitution and By-Laws of this Church so long as you may be a member thereof; to be faithful in your attendance at the regular stated services of the Church, as long as God may give you health and strength; and to faithful support of the church?

5. Will you endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, love your bretheren in the Lord; to act toward them with kindness and justice; to judge with candor, and admonish in charity?

The new member(s), having answered these questions in the affirmative, the Pastor shall lead the congregation in the following covenant:

We, then, the members of this Church, do affectionately welcome you to this fellowship with us in the blessing of the Gospel, and covenant together, God helping us, that as strangers and pilgrims we will abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 1. that we will put away from us all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us; 2. that as we have opportunity, we will do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith; 3. that we will remember them which have the rule over us, who speak unto us the Word of God; 4. and we will give as God hath prospered us; 5. not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.-(I Peter 2:11; Eph. 4:31-32; Gal. 6:10; Heb. 13:7; I Cor 16:2; II Cor. 9:7.)

(Then the Pastor shall give the right hand of fellowship to the new members.)

**SECTION 7. Terminations of Membership.** Membership in this church may be terminated by:

A. Transfer. A Letter of Transfer shall be granted to any member who applies for it, provided that member is in good standing and not subject to or under discipline at the time of the application. When such a letter has been granted, the relationship of the member to this Church shall be considered terminated. A Letter of Transfer shall be granted at the discretion of the Consistory.

B. Exclusion. If a member is habitually absent from the Communion and other gatherings for worship and fails to communicate with the Church for a period of one year and fail to reply to communications, that member will be suspended and properly notified; if at the end of the second year he fails to reinstate himself, he shall again be notified and if by the end of the third year and after two admonitions he fails to reinstate himself, he shall then be automatically place on the Permanent Inactive List. These individuals may become members in good standing again only by vote of the Consistory after taking the regular new member class and giving their testimony before the Consistory.

C. Excommunication. (See Article IV, Section 3 of this constitution.) IT is right and in harmony with the Scriptures to exclude from this fellowship any person who holds false and heretical doctrine or who live inconsistently with a Christian profession; or who violates the law of public morals; and who disturbs the unity and peace of the church.

D. Request. Any member, upon written request, may have his name removed from the Church roll.

## ARTICLE V

### Conduct

SECTION 1. All public and private means of grace, such as regular attendance at the services of God's House (including the sacrament of the Lord's Supper), the daily reading of the Bible, private and family prayer, personal and public testimony, and the winning of others to Christ, shall be urged upon the membership. – (Eph 2:21,22;p 4:12,13; II Peter 1:5,8; 3:18)

SECTION 2. Proportionate giving is a distinct and positive command in the Scriptures (Ma. 3:8-11). The membership is urged to contribute systematically toward the support of the Church of such proportion of its income as required in the Word of God. – (Luke 6:38; Prov. 3:9,10; Matt. 23:23; I Cor 16:2)

SECTION 3. The place of each member in the Church as set forth in I Cor. 12:12-27 should be clearly understood. Only by obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ can a member grow spiritually and his talents be used for the glory of God. A member to be considered in good standing shall attend services regularly, commune at least once each year and contribute according to his means.

## ARTICLE VI

### Church Discipline

SECTION 1. The discipline of the Church shall be entirely entrusted to the Pastor and the Consistory. All members of the Church are subject to its doctrine, government and discipline.

SECTION 2. Corrective Discipline. Corrective discipline has for its aim the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the Church, and the spiritual growth of the offender. Corrective discipline implies imperfection and a tendency to sin and to cause offense. The censure, in the judgment of the Consistory, may be suspension for a period from the Lord's Table, erasure from the roll, or excommunication. Every effort shall first be made to clear up difficulties and remove offenses before church action is taken. No offense should be brought before the Church until the instructions of Christ has first been followed. – (Matt. 5:23,24; 18:15-18)

SECTION 3. Excommunication. In all cases of disorderly conduct or heretical doctrine so opposed to the Church's life and faith as to destroy the possibility of fellowship, the procedure shall be as follows: The accused person shall first be interviewed as directed in Matt. 18:15-18.

If this does not lead to restoration of fellowship, charges shall be filed with the Consistory and placed in the hands of the accused person who shall be summoned to meet the Consistory at a date not sooner than one week nor later than two weeks from the time the charges are served. This person, on being notified, may immediately select any member of the Consistory (or any member of the congregation in good standing) to assist or represent him in the examination, The President of the Consistory shall appoint one of the Consistory members for prosecution. If, after a fair and impartial hearing of all the witnesses accessible and all the facts ascertainable, the majority of the Consistory believes the accused person guilty, the name of the said party shall be stricken from the roll of the Church, unless notice of appeal is given in writing to the Secretary of the Consistory within five days. If appealed, a special meeting of the congregation shall be convened for the purpose of electing a Council of Appeal, as provided for in Article VII of this Constitution, but unless a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at the congregational meeting is secured, the decision of the Consistory shall stand. If the case is reviewed by the Council of Appeal, its decision shall be final.

SECTION 4. Restoration of Excluded Members. The right to exclude persons or the withdrawal of fellowship (II Thess. 3:6) is in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament (Matt 18:16,17; I Cor 5) The Apostolic Church had also the right to restore excluded members who gave satisfactory evidence for being penitent (II Cor 2:6-8). The object of the exclusion or suspension having been accomplished, the Consistory shall have the right to restore the penitent member to full membership by a two-thirds vote.

## ARTICLE VII

### Council of Appeal

SECTION 1. Any matter may be taken to the Council of Appeal for decision if it involves any controversy within the Church, within the Consistory, between the Church Congregation and the Consistory, or between the Church Congregation or the Consistory and the Pastor, which controversy threatens to cause dissension resulting in probably injury to the welfare of the Church and which has not been decided by the Consistory in such a manner as to allay dissension.

SECTION 2. The membership of this Council shall consist of three Elders, and three laymen in good standing, and the Pastor who shall act as chairman thereof. All of the members of this Council shall be chosen by the congregation at a regularly called meeting. This Council shall be elected only as the request of the Consistory, or by two-thirds vote of a regularly called congregational meeting.

SECTION 3. Should it ever occur the Pastor is the defendant or so involved as to make it unwise for him to preside over the Council, the President of the Consistory shall preside over the meetings of the Council of Appeal. The Council shall convene at the call of the chair.

SECTION 4. The decision of the case before the Council of Appeal must be reached by at least a 5 to 2 vote with the chair voting. Voting shall be by ballot. When the final decision of the

Council of Appeal, with the reasons therefore, is announced to the congregation, that decision is final and the case ended.

## ARTICLE VIII

### Government

SECTION 1. This Church acknowledges only the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head; the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible guide in matters of faith, discipline and order; the Holy Spirit as its Teacher; and the autonomy of the local church as inherit and modifiable only by its own action.

SECTION 2. The government of the Church, the conduct of business, the management and control of all its property, real and personally, the supervision of its general work, its organizations, and branch works shall, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, be vested in the Consistory, which shall consist of the Elders and Deacons who shall be elected as provided for in the By-Laws of the Church, and the Pastor. The Pastor shall not only be a member of the Consistory, but shall by virtue of his office as Pastor, be Moderator thereof.

SECTION 3. The Consistory within a reasonable period after the annual election, shall meet and elect from among themselves a President and a Recording Secretary. The Consistory may also elect a Treasurer, a Financial Secretary, and such other officers as may from time to time be deemed necessary.

SECTION 4. The necessary quorum and manner in which the Consistory shall be convened shall be provided for in the By-Laws; but no meeting of the Consistory shall ever be called during the absence of the Pastor without his knowledge; except that in cases of emergency in the Pastor's absence, the Consistory may act, but only by the consent of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Consistory present and voting at such meeting.

SECTION 5. The Consistory shall have the power to delegate to either individuals or committees the right to transact any of its business or exercise of such powers. The transaction of such business or the exercise of such powers, however, shall be subject at all times to the supervision and control of the Consistory.

SECTION 6. Without in any manner limiting the authority of the Consistory but solely for the purpose of enumerating some of its powers, the Consistory shall have power to:

A. Call congregational meetings for any purpose which it deems to be necessary or proper, provided that notice of such a meeting shall be given as may be provided in the By-Laws.

B. Receive, consider, and dispose of any grievances, suggestions, or recommendation by any member or organization of the Church.

C. Accept persons into Church membership, discipline them and terminate their Church membership in the manner herein provided.

D. Exercise all powers and duties which belong to the sole governing body of the Church, congregation and corporation, which includes the oversight of all auxiliary organizations, fellowship groups, etc., but shall at all times be subject to the two-thirds (2/3) vote of the congregation present and voting.

SECTION 7. When the Church is without a pastor, it shall be the duty of the Consistory (or Joint Consistory) to supply the pulpit with men whose Christian character and teaching are in accord with the Object and Articles of Faith of this Church, and who will subscribe to these without mental reservation.

## ARTICLE IX

### Finances

SECTION 1. The Trustees shall not encumber with loan, or transfer, or sell or purchase any real estate for the Church except by the express authorization conveyed through a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership present and voting at a constitutionally called congregational meeting. No obligation shall be incurred to spend over two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2500) on one item without special vote of the congregation, unless aid item appears in the adopted budget.

SECTION 2. All auxiliary organizations, fellowship groups, etc., are responsible to, and under the jurisdiction of, the Church through the Consistory.

## ARTICLE X

### Officers

#### Elders

SECTION 1. Elders to be elected by the Church shall normally be three (3) in number. Should no suitable and/or available men be found to fill the office of elder, the consistory may operate at a deficiency or surplus, but should never function without elders.

SECTION 2. Any vacancy in the office of Elder may be filled by appointment of the Consistory until the next annual congregational election, at which time the Congregation may elect an Elder to serve the unexpired term.

SECTION 3. Elders shall be elected for a period of three (3) years; their term office shall be so arranged that approximately one-third (1/3) of the Elder's terms of office shall expire each year. After the completion of a term, an Elder may be re-elected for a second three (3) year term. After his second term, however, he shall not be eligible for re-election to the Consistory until a full year has elapsed, that is to say, a person shall not serve on the Consistory for more than six (6) consecutive years without a one-year interval.

SECTION 4. To be considered eligible for the office of Elder, a person shall have served a full three year term as a duly ordained and installed Deacon.

SECTION 5. Elders shall be men who are regular members in full communion of the Church, of mature judgment and unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Word of God and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the spiritual welfare of the Church. – (I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9)

After they have been elected, but before they may assume office, they shall be ordained and installed as Ruling Elders in the following manner. They shall receive instruction from the Pastor, and then appear before the congregation and respond affirmatively to the following questions:

A. Do you believe the Scriptures as written in the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and accept them as the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

B. Have you accepted the Object, Doctrine, practice and rule of this church?

C. Will you be cheerfully governed by the Constitution and By-Laws of this church, and promise to study its purity, unity, and peace?

D. Do you accept the office of Ruling Elder (or Deacon) and Promise to perform faithfully all the duties of the Office according to the Word of God?

(Then the question shall be put to the congregation as follows:)

Do you, the members of this Church, acknowledge and receive these brethren as Ruling Elders and Deacons, and do you promise to pray for them that they may be Spirit-filled and Spirit-guided men, and will you yield to them that honor obedience in the Lord to which they are entitled according to the Word of God and the Constitution of the Church?

(The members will answer in the affirmative by raising their right hands, and the Pastor shall proceed to consecrate the candidates to their office, by prayer, as the Elders-elect devoutly kneel.)

Those who have not previously been ordained to office shall be ordained by the minister laying his right hand on the head of each one in succession and saying, “Take thou the authority to execute the office of (Elder or Deacon) in the Church of Jesus Christ our Lord, which office I now solemnly commit unto thee in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen”

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Lord Jesus Christ, I hereby declare you to be regularly elected and duly ordained and installed Ruling Elder in St. Paul’s Reformed Church.

SECTION 6. It shall be the duty of the Elders to be diligent and faithful in attendance at the Consistory meetings and at the regular service of the Church; they shall assist the Pastor at the Lord’s Table and in the ministry of visitation among members of the congregation; they shall

provide the elements for the Lord's Supper when requested to do so; they shall pray for and encourage the Pastor and assist him in the spiritual oversight of the Church.

#### Deacons

SECTION 7. Sections 1-4 of Article X of the Constitution shall also apply to Deacons. Their particular responsibility shall be to look after the needy members of our Church, as provided for in Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Tim. 3:1-13; and they shall hold themselves in readiness for church visitation, ushering, and other duties, when requested to do so.

SECTION 8. Deacons shall be elected and installed in the same manner as Elders, as provided for in Sections 1-4 of Article X of the Constitution and in the By-Laws.

#### Trustees

SECTION 9. Trustees shall be entrusted with the general maintenance and upkeep of the church building and property. All expenditures over \$500 must be brought to the consistory for approval. Trustees shall meet with the consistory at least twice a year. Trustees shall be elected and installed in the same manner as Elders and Deacons, as provided for in Sections 1-3 of Article X of the Constitution and By-Laws.

### ARTICLE XI

#### Pastors

SECTION 1. The Pastor of the Church shall be chosen by the congregation (or congregations) for an indefinite period, by ballot, upon the recommendation of the Consistory after prayerful investigation and consideration. Only such men shall be recommended who can and will conscientiously affirm and subscribe without mental reservation, to the Doctrinal Subscription stated in Article XII. The selection of the Pastor shall be voted upon at a meeting of the congregation specially called for that purpose. Notice of such meeting shall be given at the morning Church Service on the two consecutive Lord's Days preceding the meeting called for such election. A majority of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the voting membership present and voting shall be necessary to elect a pastor.

SECTION 2. The Pastor shall perform all duties of the ministry, and shall, with the prayerful support of the Consistory, have control of all meetings and spiritual affairs of the Church.

SECTION 3. The Pastor and the Consistory shall consider and decide upon all pulpit supplies and special pulpit features.

SECTION 4. If at any time the Pastor shall make application to be released from the pastorate, or if the relations between the Pastor and the congregation become such as to be detrimental to the welfare of the Church, the relationship may be terminated by the congregation in ninety days from the date of the notice of intention, or in a shorter period of time, if it be mutually agreed upon. The Consistory shall have authority to consider matter and make recommendations to the

congregation, but it shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership present and voting at a constitutionally called congregational meeting to dismiss the Pastor.

## ARTICLE XII

### Doctrinal Subscription

The Pastor, Elders, Deacons, Trustees, officer of the church, officers of organizations, and officers in the Sunday School shall be regular members in full communion of the Church. They, together with all of the teachers in the Sunday School (who need not be members of the Church but must be willing to submit to the discipline of the Church), must be of mature judgment and unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Word of God and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the spiritual welfare of the Church, and shall answer in the affirmative and subscribe annually to the following questions:

A. Are you in hearty agreement with the Object, Articles of Faith, Constitution and By-Laws of this Church?

B. Are you living a surrendered, prayerful Christian life, especially as regards loyal obedience to the moral precepts taught in the Word of God for believers?

## ARTICLE XIII

### Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the congregation present and voting at any regular congregational meeting or special meeting called for the purpose, providing in either case, that such amendment shall be distributed in written form to the membership at least two weeks prior to such congregational meeting. Article III shall only be amended under serious consideration and with much prayer and wise counsel. All such amendments to Article III must be in accord with the Reformed heritage of St. Paul's Reformed Church.

## THE BY-LAWS

### ARTICLE I

#### Meetings

SECTION 1. The fiscal year of the Church shall run from November 1 to October 31.

SECTION 2. The annual meeting of the congregation shall be announced on two successive Sundays prior to the meeting, and shall be held during the first two weeks of November, in the Church building, for the approval of the budget, for the reception of reports, and for the transaction of such business as may be properly brought before the meeting. The Pastor shall act as presiding officer at all congregational meetings.

SECTION 3. Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Consistory at any time, provided that notice of the time, place, and purpose thereof, shall be given at the morning service on two consecutive Lord's Days immediately preceding such meeting.

SECTION 4. Special meetings shall be called by the Consistory, or if they fail to act, then by the Pastor, when such a meeting is required under the provision of the Constitution and by-Laws, or when written request to call such a meeting shall be signed by 25% of the members of the Church in good standing and shall be presented to the Secretary of the Consistory. Notice of such meeting shall be given in accordance with the provision of Section 3 hereof. Only matters for which such a meeting is called may be discussed or considered.

SECTION 5. The Consistory shall arrange all the details of all congregational meetings and see that all possible preparation for their successful conduct is made.

SECTION 6. Any person whose name appears on the roll of the Church, who is not under discipline, shall be presumed to be a member in good and regular standing.

SECTION 7. Any member of the Church in good and regular standing shall have the right to vote on all questions properly brought before any congregational meeting. The Consistory members shall have the right to vote on any matter as individuals, even when their action on the Consistory has been called in question.

SECTION 8. At any congregational meeting called in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution and By-Laws, 25% of the membership shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business.

SECTION 9. All congregational meetings, unless otherwise specified by the Constitution and By-Laws, shall be conducted according to Robert's Revised Rules of Order.

## ARTICLE II

### The Consistory

SECTION 1. It is recommended that the Consistory hold at least one meeting every three months.

SECTION 2. The quorum of the Consistory shall be the Pastor and at least half of the Consistory members. When the church is without a pastor, the quorum shall be the President and at least one-half (1/2) of the total number of the Consistory members. The Consistory shall meet at the call of the chair or at the request of one-third (1/3) of the Consistory.

SECTION 3. The Recording Secretary shall keep a record of all business transacted at the congregational and Consistory meetings, keep an accurate record of the membership, and carry on all necessary correspondence for the Consistory and the congregation.

SECTION 4. The Treasurer shall deposit all church funds in a bank account, or accounts, as instructed by the Consistory, which shall be opened and maintained in the name of the Church, and shall disburse the same at the direction of the Consistory. He shall make a quarterly written report to the Consistory and an annual report to the congregation. He shall submit his books for an annual audit prior to the congregational meeting and at such other time or times as shall be directed by the Consistory. He shall also count and keep a record of all regular offerings of the Church in the presence of the Financial Secretary or some other members of the Consistory. In his absence, the Financial Secretary shall perform the duties of Treasurer.

SECTION 5. All persons who handle funds of the Church and its organizations shall, if so required by the Consistory, furnish a bond in the amount required by the Consistory, the cost of which shall be paid by the church.

SECTION 6. All persons who handle funds of the Church and its organizations shall, when so required by the Consistory, furnish their books, legible and balanced, for inspection or audit.

### ARTICLE III

#### Nominations and Elections

SECTION 1. Two months prior to the annual meeting in November, the consistory shall solicit from the congregation names in nomination in writing for each vacancy in the office of Elder, Deacon, and Trustee.

SECTION 2. The Consistory shall approve nominees for each vacancy in the office of Elder, Deacon, and Trustee. The consistory may also make nominations. The list of names of nominees shall be read at least during one regular service prior to the annual meeting. The consistory may choose not to submit names for the vacancies if no suitable or available men are found. The personal nominated must be willing to accept the Articles of the Constitution and the By-Laws of this Church.

SECTION 3. Serious consideration shall be given to the personal qualifications and spiritual perception of all whose names are submitted in nomination for the Office of Elder, Deacon, or Trustee.

SECTION 4. All Elders, Deacons, and Trustees of the Church shall be elected by ballot by the voting membership of the Church at a meeting called for such purpose. The nominee for Elder, the nominee for Deacon and the nominee for Trustee receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the case of tie, a written ballot shall determine the elected officer. These newly elected officers shall be installed at the earliest convenient worship service in January and shall assume their offices immediately upon installation.

### ARTICLE IV

#### The Sunday School Association

SECTION 1. Purpose and Powers. The Sunday School Association shall be charged with the responsibility of providing and directing an effective Sunday School for St. Paul's Reformed Church. The overall purpose of the Sunday School is to glorify the Lord by providing spiritual training for the adults and children of the church. Its goals will be twofold: first to reach out to the unsaved of the church and community with the life-giving message of Jesus' atonement for sin and so to bring them to a place of personal faith and salvation; second, the Sunday School shall design appropriate programs of instruction to provide training for Christians in the things of God that our people might grow into maturity in Christ. Since the Bible is God's Word to mankind, the Sunday School shall endeavor to equip each student with the Bible knowledge and skills necessary for deepening a life-time relationship with the Savior. The Sunday School Association shall be responsible for conducting the Sunday School and all activities directly related to it. Among its various responsibilities it shall: fill vacancies in the ranks of the teachers or superintendents of departments from those spiritually, emotionally and educationally qualified to serve in these areas; purchase such standard teaching materials and aids as it deems best; adopt a missions program for the Sunday School and a Scripture memory program to help our children attend camp; add any other program that shall be helpful in fulfilling its purpose. All actions of the Association shall be reported to the Consistory and be subject to its review.

SECTION 2. Membership and Meetings. The Sunday School Association shall be composed of the Superintendents, Teachers and Officers of the Sunday School. It shall meet at least once every three months at the call of the Superintendent to discuss and decide business properly before it, to plan and pray for the furtherance of the ministry of the Sunday School and to evaluate its current success at fulfilling its purpose. It is important that all members attend these meetings and so a quorum shall be three-fourths of the members.

SECTION 3. Officers. The Officers shall be the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, the Treasurer and the Secretary. They shall be elected from the membership of the Congregation at the annual meeting. The Consistory shall nominate at least one person for each office and one further nomination shall be permitted from the floor for each office at the time of the election. Their term of office shall be one year and shall begin on January first. The Superintendent shall moderate all meetings of the Sunday School Association and be responsible for the week to week running of the Sunday School Association and shall insure that each class is being conducted in a way that glorifies the Lord. He shall serve as liaison between the Sunday School Association and the Consistory. The Assistant Superintendent shall help the Superintendent to fulfill his duties, shall assume his duties in his absence and shall become Superintendent if that office becomes vacant. The Treasurer shall count and keep all funds of the Sunday School and shall disburse them at the direction of the Association. He shall keep his books legible and clear and shall have them audited by the Trustees before the annual congregational meeting each year. The Secretary shall keep records of attendance in each class and keep the minutes of the Association meetings. If any vacancy occurs in any of the three latter offices during the year, it shall be filled by the Consistory.

SECTION 4. Teachers. Teachers are the most important part of the Sunday School. They must be godly men and women who have burden to serve their students in the things of Christ. The teacher must be faithful in prayer for their teaching and their pupils. If a teacher must be absent from his class he shall endeavor to get a worthy substitute and notify the Superintendent as soon

as possible. If desired, the Association may also elect superintendents for any of the various departments.

## ARTICLE V

### Deacon's Fund

The Deacon's Fund shall be composed of all monies specifically designated for it. Any expenditure from these funds shall require the approval of two of the three deacons. When possible, payments should be in form of gift certificates (from places like grocery stores) rather than giving cash money to people. Priority should be given to members of the local community who are in need over strangers who are passing through when determining to whom gifts are to be given.

## ARTICLE VI

### Weddings and Marriages

SECTION 1. We reject any definition of marriage that is anything other than the union of one man by birth and one woman by birth, and recognize that such arrangements which deviate from this order are sinful. Weddings failing to meet these criteria will not be performed at St. Paul's Reformed Church or by its pastor(s).

SECTION 2. All forms of sexual sin shall be taught as violations of God's law by the pastor(s) and teachers of St. Paul's Reformed Church.

SECTION 3. We will deal with sexual sin with love, the declaration of the law, and the preaching of the gospel, and in some cases church discipline. Aggressive and violent actions toward those involved in sexually sinful lifestyles shall not be tolerated.

SECTION 4. The pastor(s) and/or the consistory have the right to refuse to perform any wedding ceremony, or hold any wedding at St. Paul's Reformed Church.

## ARTICLE VII

SECTION 1. In case of dissolution of the local church, the entire residue of money in the treasury will be disbursed among fundamental missions at the direction of the last officers.

SECTION 2. These by-laws may amended by a two-thirds vote of the Congregation present and voting at any regular congregational meeting or special meeting called for the purpose, provided that such amendment shall be distributed in written form to the church membership at least two weeks prior to such meeting.