



**CRANSTON CHRISTIAN**  
— FELLOWSHIP —

# Constitution & By-laws

Updated November 2019

Love God. Follow Jesus. Serve Others.

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Part I:

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# CONSTITUTION

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## I. Name

This church shall be known as the Cranston Christian Fellowship.

## II. Doctrinal Basis

With the Word of God as its only basis and authority, the Cranston Christian Fellowship acknowledges its spiritual kinship with other biblically faithful churches. Specifically, the members of this church shall be in agreement with these Articles of Faith, shall respect and uphold these Unifying Convictions, and shall order their lives according to this Church Covenant.

A. Articles of Faith, expressing the essentials of the gospel and the basis of our fellowship in the family of God, each member holding to them without reservation:

### Article 1

We believe that there is only one living and true God, who possesses all possible perfections, and each in an infinite degree; and that He has revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures to His people under the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, these three persons being the same in essence and equal in every divine perfection. (Exodus 20:1-3; Isaiah 46:9; Mark 12:29; John 10:30; 14:9; 16:7-15; Matthew 28:19)

### Article 2

We believe that the Son, who is the Word of the Father, who is himself the eternal God, took man's nature of the Virgin Mary, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, who is Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man. We believe that He truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried, to reconcile us to the Father, and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of man. (Philippians 2:6-8; John 1:1, 14; Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 20:28; Romans 5:18-21; I Peter 2:24; 3:18; Hebrews 1:8; Ephesians 2:16)

### Article 3

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ rose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of God, where He ever lives to make intercession for the redeemed. (I Corinthians 15:20; I Peter 1:3; Hebrews 1:3; 7:25; I John 2:1)

### Article 4

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, was sent to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, to effect the new

birth, to baptize all believers into the body of Christ, to permanently indwell them, and to lead them into all truth. (John 16:7, 8, 13, 15; Acts 2:33; John 3:6-9; I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9)

#### Article 5

We believe that the Holy Scriptures are the inspired, inerrant Word of God, and contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatever is not found in them and cannot be proved by them is neither to be required as an article of faith, nor to be regarded as necessary to salvation. The Scriptures alone are our only all-sufficient authoritative guide for faith and living. (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 2:16, 17; John 10:34, 35; Luke 16:17)

#### Article 6

We believe that man was created in a holy and happy state, but by his disobedience to the laws of his Creator, he not only exposed himself to personal misery, but involved his whole posterity in the temporal and eternal consequences of sin. As an effect of his rebellion, the whole human race possesses a depraved nature, by which they are disinclined to things morally good, and prone to choose and delight in evil. (Genesis 1:27, 31; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 3:6-24; Romans 5:12; John 3:6; Psalm 51:5; Romans 8:7; 6:23; Ephesians 32:1-3; Romans 1:32; 3:10-18; Jeremiah 13:23; Matthew 25:46)

#### Article 7

We believe that the only way of salvation from this state of guilt and condemnation is through the righteous life and atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is now exalted to be our reigning King and living Savior, granting repentance and forgiveness, so that whosoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (Isaiah 53:4-8; John 10:9-11, 15; Acts 4:11-12; 5:31; Romans 5:6, 8-11, 21; 6:23; 3:21-26; John 3:16-36)

#### Article 8

We believe that Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification, and that we have the fullest assurance that those truly born of the Spirit and trusting in Christ shall never be lost, and that those who die in the Lord shall rise again to a glorious eternal life in the presence of God. In light of such assurance, it is the duty of all believers to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, by sincere and loving obedience to the commands and teachings of His Word. (John 10:28; Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:28-39; 4:25; 5:18; I Corinthians 15:3, 52, 53; 2 Peter 1:10)

#### Article 9

We believe that Christ will come a second time with power and great glory; that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous; that the justified children of God will be raised to an incorruptible state. These

redeemed ones, together with the righteous living, will be changed in a moment, be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body, and received into Christ's kingdom and glory, and so shall they ever be with the Lord; and that the unrighteous shall awake to judgment and everlasting condemnation. (Hebrews 9:28; Titus 2:13; Colossians 3:4; Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15:52; 2 Corinthians 5:10; I Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Daniel 12:2; Revelation 22:11)

B. Unifying Convictions, expressing our historic understanding, practice, and teaching, which our members respect and support in a spirit of unity and harmony:

#### Conviction 1

We teach that the first day of the week, called the Lord's Day, ought to be set apart for rest and for spiritual ministry, and that it is our duty to assemble on that day and worship God with his gathered people, by offering up our prayers, praise and thanksgiving, by giving attention to the preached Word, and by breaking bread with His assembled people. (Exodus 20:8, 11; John 20:1, 19, 26; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1, 2; Colossians 3:16)

#### Conviction 2

We teach that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, to be continued until His second coming. We teach that scriptural baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Christ, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and our death to sin and resurrection to a new life through our identification with Him. (Matthew 28:19; John 3:23; Acts 2:41, 42; 8:36-39)

#### Conviction 3

We teach that the Lord's Supper is a provision of bread and wine, as symbols of Christ's body and blood, of which is partaken by believers in Christ in commemoration of the suffering and death of their Lord. By taking it together, we show our faith and participation in the merits of His sacrifice, and our hope of eternal life through His resurrection from the dead. This observance is to be preceded by faithful self-examination. (I Corinthians 11:23-26; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; I Corinthians 10:16)

#### Conviction 4

We teach the importance of the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and His gifts: the need for His daily filling, and the value of discovering the gifts for ministry that He has given to us for today. We also teach that certain gifts, called "signs," had a unique purpose in the unfolding and completion of God's special revelation to His Church. These gifts are not essential for sanctification or for empowered ministry, should not be sought or urged upon others, and

are not exercised in our gatherings. (Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12:29, 30; 14:32, 33; Ephesians 2:20; Hebrews 2:3,4)

### Conviction 5

We teach that the Church of Christ in its visible form is a congregation of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ who are associated with one another freely by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. They observe the ordinances of Christ, exercise their gifts, and enjoy the blessings of His Word, for mutual edification and the spread of the gospel throughout the world. We teach that its officers are Elders (or Pastors or Bishops) and Deacons, whose qualifications and duties are clearly set forth in the letters of Paul. (Acts 2:41, 47; 11:21-23; I Corinthians 1:1-13; 4:17; 14:23; 3 John 9; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Matthew 28:20; Galatians 6:2; I Timothy 3)

### C. Church Covenant, expressing our commitment to Christian living and community, by which we endeavor to order our lives:

“God has led us, by His Spirit and grace, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and to profess our faith in Him through the testimony of our confession of Him and the visible witness of Christian baptism. Therefore, we do most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

“We agree, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to fulfill this mission: To call all to love God, follow Jesus, and serve others.

“As members of one another, we each will endeavor, by the grace of God,

- ❖ To assemble together weekly for worship, instruction, and mutual encouragement.
- ❖ To participate faithfully in the face-to-face fellowship of one of the church’s smaller groups for prayer, spiritual growth, and ministry to others.
- ❖ To serve God in a ministry of His calling, seeking to use our time, gifts, and talents in partnership with others, for His glory.
- ❖ To honor God through regular first-fruits giving to His work through the local church.

“We also agree to practice family and personal worship; to train our children in the things of God; to live a godly life before the watching world; to live a life of integrity, of faithfulness, and of exemplary conduct; to refrain from sexual immorality, including all sexual conduct outside of the bonds of the covenant of marriage binding a man and a woman; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, bitterness and excessive anger; to abstain from anything that might have the appearance of evil, cause a brother to stumble, or harm our

testimony for Christ; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

“In obedience to our Lord’s commission, we will endeavor to reach each lost person within our circle of influence, seeing that each is prayed for by others, is exposed to Christian friendship and compassion, and is provided with a way to hear the gospel message presented clearly and positively. We will also seek to grow in our understanding of God’s plan for the nations, to be engaged in the support of evangelization through prayer and giving, and to make ourselves personally available to serve God cross-culturally, should He so lead.

“We further agree to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in times of sickness and distress; to have an attitude of sympathy and courtesy toward others; to be slow to take offense, and to be quick to pursue reconciliation and peace, according to the rules of our Savior.

“We moreover agree that, before we separate from this fellowship, we will seek the care, prayer, and counsel of the Elders in a spirit of love and humility; and that should we leave this local area or be lead to withdraw from this fellowship, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God’s Word.”

### **III. Mission and Vision**

This church exists to call all to love God, follow Jesus, and to serve others. Its vision is to radically change the spiritual climate of Rhode Island, one person, one community at a time.

### **IV. Membership**

The membership of this church consists of baptized adult believers, professing faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and declaring their agreement with the above Articles of Faith, their commitment to respect and uphold these Unifying Convictions, and their intention to order their lives according to this Covenant, in accordance with the church’s By-laws. Additionally, baptized minors who give a credible testimony of faith in Jesus and affirm their desire to live for Him in the fellowship of His Church may become non-voting members.

### **V. Governance**

This church, as a visible expression of the one Church for whom Christ died, is governed by Him as its Head, through the authority of the Scriptures and the

counsel of His Holy Spirit. As His earthly people covenanted together, we agree to order our life and fellowship in accordance with the Word of God, and with this Constitution and its By-laws.

## **VI. Exclusion**

No part of the net earnings of this incorporated church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church or its officers shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the religious, charitable, and educational purposes set forth in Sections II and III above.

## **VII. Dissolution**

Should God, in His sovereignty, allow this church to cease its ministry and thereby dissolve as a corporation, all remaining assets shall, after paying any existing liabilities, be distributed as the existing membership directs to exclusively religious, charitable, or educational organizations which are in keeping with the purpose and objectives of the corporation, under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding revision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

## **VIII. Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended at any business meeting called for such purpose. The announcement for such a purpose shall take the form of written notices sent to all resident members in good standing within a period of not less than thirty days before the proposed meeting. An amendment of the Constitution shall require an affirmative vote of nine-tenths (90%) of the voting members in attendance. A quorum shall consist of twenty percent of those entitled to vote.



PART II.

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# BY-LAWS

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## I. Church Membership

### A. Membership Definition

The members of this church are those adults who have declared in writing their agreement with the above Articles of Faith, their commitment to respect and uphold these Unifying Convictions, and their intention to order their lives according to this Covenant and to uphold the Constitution and By-laws, and who have not been dismissed or removed from membership by action of the Elders, nor excluded from fellowship by action of the congregation.

Additionally, baptized minors under the age of eighteen who give a credible testimony of faith in Jesus Christ and affirm their desire to live for Him in the fellowship of His Church may become non-voting members. These may maintain their membership standing if they provide, during their eighteenth year, the written declaration required of adults.

### B. Reception of new members

Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who subscribe to the Articles of Faith, Unifying Convictions, and Covenant of this church and who desire to become members shall make this known to the Elders. If, after proper instruction, the Elders are satisfied that the applicant meets the biblical requirements for membership, the person shall be added to the membership roll and a notice provided to the congregation.

Believers who have not been baptized in accordance with the church's conviction concerning scriptural baptism shall first be immersed upon profession of faith in Christ. Others may be received on the basis of their Christian experience after satisfactory inquiry into any previous church relationships.

### C. Dismissal from membership

**1. Commendation.** A member in good standing who desires to unite with another assembly may request a letter of commendation from the Elders. Having acted on the request and granted the letter, the Elders shall remove the member from the roll.

**2. Resignation.** A member who believes that he can no longer in good conscience uphold either the Articles of Faith, Unifying Convictions, or Church Covenant may request in writing to the Elders to be released from membership. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Elders shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and

enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Elders are unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to his gifts and needs. If it appears to the Elders that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline, that request shall not be given effect until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded.

After the Elders have acted on the request, the clerk shall send notice of the action and remove the member from the roll. If the Elders' inquiry brings to light error in the member's thinking, the granting of the request may be accompanied by due admonition of the departing member; in some cases instruction or warning to the congregation may be in order.

**3. Non-Resident members.** Since all members have covenanted that should they move their residence, they will as soon as possible unite with another like-minded church, all non-resident members who have not done so within one year of their departure and who have not provided a satisfactory written explanation to the Elders shall be removed from the membership by action of the Elders and the clerk shall remove the name from the roll.

#### D. Suspension of membership privileges

Any conduct on the part of a member which disturbs the peace of the church, prejudices its testimony, or is out of harmony with the Church Covenant, may require that the offending brother or sister be barred by action of the Elders from participating in some of the privileges of church membership. These might include involvement in church ministries, participating in congregational decisions, or sharing in the Lord's Table (2 Thessalonians. 3:6-15). At the discretion of the Elders, depending on the nature of the offense, a suspension may be announced to the congregation. A suspension shall remain in effect until the suspended member gives evidence of true repentance and change of conduct. Those who humbly submit to the imposed discipline shall afterwards be restored to full fellowship and service. Those who continue under suspension without repentance and who separate themselves from the congregation may be removed from the membership by action of the Elders. The clerk shall remove the member's name from the roll.

Circumstances warranting suspension of membership privileges may include the following:

1. A member's habitual absence from the stated meetings of the church which continues without just cause after due private admonition

2. Scandalous public conduct on the part of a member
3. A member is accused or suspected of sin and absents himself/herself from the congregation and avoids the Elders, so that the matter is unable to be looked into.

## E. Exclusion from fellowship

All instances of offense, trespass, error, or difficulty between members are to be first corrected by private admonition (Matthew 18:15) with gentleness, meekness (Galatians 6:1), patience, and love (I Corinthians 16:14). Those who do not respond to such ministry are to be admonished further in the presence of other believers or the Elders (Matthew 18:16).

If these earnest efforts to bring about true repentance and reformation fail, the Elders shall report this to the congregation at a properly called meeting and recommend that the church withdraw its fellowship from the offender, removing him/her from the membership and barring his/her participation in the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 5:4-13).

This official action shall be taken with solemn prayer (Matthew 18:18-20; I Corinthians 5:2) and with the purpose of the brother or sister's eventual restoration to fellowship with Christ and His Church.

## F. Conflicts among members

Issues of conflict or dispute among members or between members and the church or its officers that cannot be resolved through the church's own internal procedures, shall be resolved according to biblical principles (such as those set forth in Matthew 5:23-25 and 18:15-20, and 1 Corinthians 6:1-8) without resort to civil courts. Such issues shall be resolved by submitting the matter to mediation and, if necessary, arbitration, according to the By-laws of this church and the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation. Arbitration is a legally binding process, and judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.

## G. Confidentiality

1. The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (see Matt. 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Prov. 16:28; 26:20), invites confession (see Prov. 11:13; 28:13; James 5:16), and encourages people to seek needed counseling (see Prov.

20:19; Rom. 15:14). Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of this church, all members are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, our Pastor and Elders shall carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the following guidelines.

2. Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the Pastors and Elders of this church believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:

a. When a Pastor or Elder is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice, with the knowledge of the person, from other Pastors or Elders in this church or, if the person attends another church, from the Pastors or Elders of that church (see Prov. 11:14; 13:10; 15:22; 19:20; 20:18; Matt. 18:15-17);

b. When the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (see Prov. 24:11-12);

c. When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to institute disciplinary proceedings (see Matt. 18:15-20 and Bylaw I.,E) or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (see, e.g., Rom. 13:1-5); or

d. When required by law to report suspected child abuse.

3. Scripture commands that confidential information is to be shared with others only when a problem cannot be resolved through the efforts of a small group of people within the church (Matt. 18:15-17). Therefore, except as provided in (I.,G.,b.), a Pastor or Elder may not disclose confidential information to anyone outside this church without the approval of the Elders or the consent of the person who originally disclosed the information. The Elders may approve such disclosure only when it finds that all internal efforts to resolve a problem have been exhausted (see, e.g., 1 Corinthians 6:1-8) and the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved without the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (see, e.g., Rom. 13:1-5). This limitation shall apply to but is not limited to the giving of testimony in a court of law and the reporting of abuse.

4. The Pastors and Elders may, but need not, provide counselees with written notice of these confidentiality provisions, but these provisions shall be in effect regardless of whether such notice is given.

## II. Officers

The officers of this church shall be the Elders and Deacons. For the purposes of incorporation, the corporate officers shall be the Moderator (“President”), the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, and the Church Clerk (“Secretary”).

### A. Elders

The Elders and the Elder Board, designated variously in Scripture as shepherds, pastors (Acts 20:28), overseers (1 Timothy 3:1), and leaders or rulers (Hebrews 13:17), are together responsible for overseeing the members and corporate life of the congregation.

#### 1. Qualifications and Election

a. The office of Elder is open to all scripturally qualified male members of the congregation (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3) who are appointed by the Elders and confirmed by a three-fourths vote of the congregation. Members may at any time suggest names of candidates whom they believe should be considered for this office.

b. The Lead Pastor presides ex-officio over the Elders, or, in his absence, the Chairman of the Elder Board.

c. Elders serve the congregation as long as their ministry is satisfactory to themselves, their colleagues, and the congregation, and as long as their lives are consistent with the biblical qualifications. A member who believes that an officer’s life or ministry is in need of correction shall take the private steps prescribed in Matthew 18:15; James 5:19, 20; and Galatians 6:1. If the results of this seem unsatisfactory, he shall bring his concerns to the Elders and meet with them with the officer. Problems not resolved in this way shall be handled in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19-21 and Matthew 18:15-17. Following the gracious use of these steps, an officer may be removed from his office by action of the Elders.

d. An Elder may resign his office by submitting a letter of resignation to the Elders.

e. Those ordained (selected) as Elders from within the congregation, unless they are removed or resign, shall retain their office indefinitely.

## 2. Duties of the Elders

The Elders are responsible for the care of individual church members, for the exercise of discipline, and for the addition and removal of church members. Their duties include the following:

- a. To establish and maintain policies related to their duties
- b. To approve candidates for baptism and church membership and to act on matters pertaining to the reception, commendation, removal, or suspension of church members, according to Section I of these By-laws (“Church Membership”)
- c. To appoint others to serve as Elders and Deacons and present them to the congregation for confirmation of their appointment
- d. To pray regularly for the church members and the ministry of the congregation
- e. To make recommendations to the congregation concerning amendments to this Constitution and these By-laws
- f. The Secretary of the Elder Board serves as Secretary of the Elders and is to create and certify complete and accurate minutes of the official deliberations of the Elders, and convey these to the Church Clerk, to be collated and maintained.
- g. To adopt whatever rules and guidelines which they deem necessary for orderly and conclusive deliberations and which are not in conflict with these By-laws. Decisions of the Elders shall be taken by unanimous consent, unless three-fourths of the Elders vote to suspend this policy in a particular case. For such cases, a simple majority will be required.

## B. The Elder Board

### 1. Qualification and Selection

- a. The Elder Board shall consist of those members elected as Elders who are not on the paid staff of the church, along with the Lead Pastor.
- b. A minimum of four, and a maximum of twelve, members shall constitute the Elder Board. Should their number fall below four, an ad-hoc Steering Committee shall be recommended by the Elders and confirmed by the congregation to serve in their place until such time as the Elder Board has been returned to its minimum size.

## 2. Duties of the Elder Board

The Elder Board serves on behalf of the church to provide directional leadership, staff oversight, and corporate governance.

### a. Directional Leadership

1. To establish and maintain policies related to its duties
2. To monitor the accomplishment of the church's mission and strategic goals
3. To be responsible for the oversight of all of the church's ministries, and the volunteer and paid staff team members who may be delegated to carry them out

### b. Staff Oversight

1. To designate and present for congregational confirmation one to serve as Lead Pastor. In the absence of a Lead Pastor on the Elder Board, the Board shall assume the responsibilities of the Lead Pastor.
2. To establish and maintain policies which define the Lead Pastor's responsibilities and expectations. The Lead Pastor, on behalf of the Elder Board, shall provide leadership and supervision to the staff team.
3. To monitor the work of the Lead Pastor and the conduct of the staff which he supervises
4. To receive recommendations from the Lead Pastor, or delegate to the Lead Pastor, the hiring and/or dismissal of paid staff members, and to establish, with the help of the Finance Team, their rate of compensation

### c. Corporate Responsibilities

1. To adopt rules and guidelines which they deem necessary for orderly and conclusive deliberations and which are not in conflict with these By-laws. Decisions of the Elder Board shall be taken by unanimous consent, unless three-fourths of the Board votes to suspend this policy in a particular case. For such cases, a simple majority will be required.

2. To appoint from among their number one, other than the Lead Pastor, to serve as Chairman of the Elder Board ("President"). The duties of the Chairman of the Elder Board include the following:

- a.) Presiding over meetings of the Elder Board



b.) Serving as spokesman for the Elder Board and exercising such functions as are delegated to him by the Elder Board

c.) Serving as Moderator of church business meetings. In his absence, the Elder Board shall appoint another to serve as a substitute.

3. To appoint from among their number one to serve as Secretary of both the Elders and the Elder Board. The Secretary of the Elder Board is to create and certify complete and accurate minutes of the official deliberations of the Elder Board, and convey these to the Church Clerk to be collated and maintained.

4. To serve as Trustees (“Directors”) for the corporation, with authority to act on behalf of the church in all matters pertaining to the church’s physical and financial properties. These responsibilities are undertaken with the assistance of the Property and Finance Teams of the Deacons.

5. To act on behalf of the church in matters pertaining to civil law and to establish such policies and procedures as shall preserve the church’s reputation for legal and financial integrity

6. The Elder Board shall be required to place all real estate transactions regarding purchases, sales, or mortgages before the church body for a vote of confirmation, according to Section III of these By-laws.

7. To prepare, with the assistance of the staff and the Finance Team, an annual budget and present it to the congregation for a vote of confirmation at the annual business meeting. The Elder Board shall have the authority to increase the original annual budget in an amount totaling not more than 3% in any fiscal year, and to make expedient amendments affecting less than 3% of the total, without congregational agreement.

## C. Deacons

### 1. Appointment

The Deacons, having been examined as to their conformity to the biblical standards for Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13), are appointed by the Elders to serve with one of the Deacon Ministry Teams for a renewable term of three years. This appointment must be confirmed by a vote of the congregation. Members may at any time suggest names of candidates whom they believe should be considered for this office.

### 2. Duties

The Deacons serve the congregation by advancing and giving leadership to the church’s mercy ministry; by assisting the Elder Board in the acquisition

and maintenance of property, facilities, and equipment; and by the management and stewardship of financial resources. They do these tasks through the work of several Ministry Teams. They also assist in the conduct of services of communion and baptism.

### 3. Ministry Teams

#### a. Mercy Team

Deacons appointed to this team, along with their wives and other members on the team, shall:

1.) Manage disbursements from the benevolent fund for those in need, in concert with the shepherding ministry of the Elders and the staff

2.) Provide physical assistance, financial aid, transportation, and other relief to the church's widows, its sick, its single parents, its unemployed, its disabled, and its aged, and to others as gospel opportunities and resources allow

#### b. Finance Team

Deacons appointed to this team, along with the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, and others on the team, are responsible for the management and expenditure of the church's financial resources, under the oversight of the Elder Board. Specifically, they shall:

1.) See to the orderly receipt and deposit of all donations to the church

2.) Research and make recommendations to the Elder Board regarding such important financial matters as:

a.) A proposed annual budget

b.) Revisions to the budget that may appear necessary when it is inadequately funded

c.) Policies and procedures that will assure the proper accounting for the church receipts and expenditures and will assure compliance with relevant laws

d.) Projections and strategies related to future staff and ministry funding and resource needs

3.) Monitor the disbursement of church funds in accordance with the currently adopted budget

4.) Make recommendations to the Elder Board concerning the compensation of staff members

5.) The work of the Finance Team may be carried out through administrative staff which the Elder Board may designate.

#### c. Property Team

Deacons appointed to this team, along with others on the team, shall see to the maintenance, safety, security, cleaning, and improvement of church property, facilities, and equipment. Specifically, they shall:

1.) Oversee, on behalf of the Elder Board, the work of any custodial staff

2.) Develop, in cooperation with the Elder Board, long-range plans related to the acquisition of equipment and the construction of additional buildings or modifications to existing buildings

3.) Administrate the use of the property portion of the annual budget

4.) Make proposals for property funding to the Finance Team and to the Elder Board

5.) The work of the Property Team may be carried out through administrative staff which the Elder Board may designate.

#### 4. Coordinator

The Elder Board shall designate one of the Deacons to serve as Coordinator for the work of the Deacons for a term of no more than two years. His duties shall be to convene a meeting of the Deacons with representatives from the Elders at least quarterly for the purpose of prayer, to foster communication and coordination of the various Deacon Ministry Teams, and to advise the Elders and/or Elder Board at their request. In addition, the Coordinator will administrate the work of assisting with services of communion and baptism.

### D. Treasurer

The Treasurer, a member in good standing of the church, shall be appointed by the Elder Board and is entrusted with the finances of the church under the direction of the Elder Board. Specifically, the Treasurer shall:

1.) Be responsible for the proper fund accounting and dispersal under direction of the Elder Board and in accordance with the budget approved by the congregation

2.) Provide to the Elder Board and to the Finance Team a monthly report on the financial condition of the church and the status of all accounts

- 3.) Be a member of the finance team

## E. Assistant Treasurer

The Assistant Treasurer, a member in good standing of the church, shall be appointed by the Elder Board as necessary. This person shall assist the Treasurer in his/her designated duties and shall be authorized to assume these duties for periods of time designated by the Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer shall be a member of the Finance Team.

## F. Church Clerk

The Church Clerk (“Secretary”) is appointed by the Elder Board for an indefinite term and is responsible to maintain the church’s official records. Specifically, the Clerk shall:

- 1.) Maintain and preserve an accurate written or electronic record of the reception, dismissal, commendation, or discipline of church members
- 2.) Create and maintain complete and accurate minutes of all congregational meetings
- 3.) Maintain the minutes of the official deliberations of both the Elders and the Elder Board received from the Secretary of the Elders and the Elder Board, and create and maintain the minutes of the church’s congregational business meetings. In addition, the Clerk shall preserve the minutes of previously existing Boards and congregational meetings.

## III. Business Meetings

### A. Calling of Business Meetings

Congregational meetings shall be held whenever requested by the Elder Board, or by 25% of the voting members making a signature petition to the Chairman of the Elder Board. No such petition shall be recognized unless those who solicit its signatures have first presented their concerns in person and in writing to the Elder Board and have subsequently given written notice of their intention to circulate a petition. Members of the church who believe that a particular matter merits the attention of the church may request the Elder Board to consider it and, if necessary, to include it on the agenda of the next business meeting. All

meetings shall be preceded by announcements that are made two Sundays in advance of the meeting and which state the purpose of the meeting.

## B. Annual Meeting

One business meeting shall be conducted annually in June for the purpose of adopting a budget, receiving reports, and handling other items of business. The fiscal year of the church shall be from July 1 to June 30.

## C. Conduct of Business Meetings

### 1. Voting Procedure

In making decisions together, the congregation seeks the benefit of wise and godly counsel through the open expression of opinion and conviction, both in discussion and in the voting process. In a spirit of humility and mutual submission, a unified consensus is always to be sought. Actions taken by the congregation shall require a three-fourths vote.

### 2. Quorum

Prayerful participation in the business meetings is the responsibility of all members; when necessary, however, meetings may be called to order when a minimum of 20% of the resident adult members in good standing are in attendance.

### 3. Rules of Order

Congregational meetings shall be conducted in an orderly manner with a stated purpose(s) under the presidency of the Moderator (Chairman of the Elder Board). While maintaining good order and efficiency, he is to serve as an impartial shepherd and overseer of the deliberations, encouraging and ensuring free, open discussion and mutual respect between the members. At the Moderator's discretion, the generally accepted rules guiding deliberative bodies, or if necessary, Robert's Rules of Order, shall be followed.

## IV. Amendment of these By-laws

These by-laws may be amended by a three-fourths vote of the congregation at any regularly called business meeting, provided copies of proposed amendments are distributed two weeks in advance of the meeting.



**CRANSTON CHRISTIAN**  
— F E L L O W S H I P —

Love God | Follow Jesus | Serve Others

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