

FAITH REFORMED CHURCH BY-LAWS

Cedar Grove, Wisconsin

(Revised and approved August 25, 2019)

ARTICLE I - NAME, AFFILIATION, AND PURPOSE

- Sec. 1 The name of this Wisconsin non-profit religious corporation is “Faith Reformed Church of Cedar Grove, Wisconsin.” In these By-laws, Faith Reformed Church of Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, will be referred to as “Congregation.”
- Sec. 2 The Congregation is a subordinate organization of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), and the Presbytery of Wisconsin, and is bound by their rules of order that pertain to a congregation.
- Sec. 3 The Congregation has the following stated mission and purpose:
At Faith Reformed Church, we:
- *Worship* God through word, song, fellowship, and prayer.
 - *Educate* people of all ages toward a deeper understanding of God’s Will and eternal purpose.
 - *Grow* in our personal and communal relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - *Serve* others by proclaiming God’s love in word and deed

ARTICLE II – STATEMENTS OF FAITH

- Sec. 1 The Congregation adheres to the Doctrinal Standards of the PCA: the Westminster Confession of Faith, together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms; and the: Apostle’s Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, and Canons of Dordt.
- Sec. 2 As secondary and supplemental to our Doctrinal Standards, the Congregation affirms the following Doctrinal Statements:

The Glory of God

God’s chief purpose in all that He wills, thinks, and does is the glory of His name.¹ Moreover, every person, indeed all creation, exists for this same purpose: to glorify God.² God is sovereign, such that there is nothing unseen, unknown, or undetermined by God in all of creation, time, or eternity.³

The Authority of Scripture

The Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments is the ultimate authority, without error in all that it intends to teach, and altogether sufficient for Christian faith and practice.⁴ The Bible reveals universal truths which are true for all people at all times and can be known with certainty and clarity. The authority of Scripture should not be made subject to or equal with other writings or

¹Isaiah 48:9-11; Habakkuk 2:14; Romans 11:34-36; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 2:10

²Psalms 86:9; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Isaiah 43:6-7; Revelation 14:6-7

³Genesis 50:20; Job 14:5; Psalm 139:1-4, 16; Isaiah 46:10; Daniel 2:21, 4:35; Matthew 10:29-31; Acts 4:27-28, 17:25-27; Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:11; HC 27, 28; BC 1, 13

⁴Psalms 12:6, 18:30; John 10:35, 17:17; Acts 24:14; Romans 3:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; BC 3, 4, 5, 6

human experience.⁵ As divine revelation, Scripture accurately describes who God is and how He wishes to be addressed, including the Trinitarian language of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁶

The Gospel of God

Humanity's greatest need is to be reconciled with God.⁷ The gospel is compromised when the grace and love of Christ are expressed without the ultimate objective of calling sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.⁸ The appropriate response to sin is one that believes in the power of God to change lives, hopes in the mercy of God to forgive sins, and loves enough to call sinners to confession and transformation.⁹ God is inclusive in that He calls all to come to Him in faith and repentance.¹⁰ God is exclusive in that only those who believe in Jesus Christ and seek to keep His commands can be assured of salvation.¹¹ The gospel is the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection and should not be equated with or reduced to mere good deeds, humanitarian relief, or societal reform.¹²

The Uniqueness of Christ

Jesus Christ is unique among the so-called gods of this world. Only in Jesus can we have salvation, fellowship, and a true understanding of God.¹³ Jesus Christ died on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice for sins, and in so doing absorbed God's wrath and eternal judgment upon our sin.¹⁴ We are counted righteous before God based on the imputed righteousness of Christ.¹⁵ Justification is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.¹⁶ No one will be saved apart from the atoning sacrifice of Christ.¹⁷ Salvation is received through personal hearing of and conscious believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ.¹⁸ The unrepentant and unbelieving will not be saved, either in this life or after physical death.¹⁹ Apart from Jesus, who is the eternal Son of God incarnate, we cannot see, know, or glorify God as He is.²⁰

⁵BC 7

⁶1 Timothy 6:15; Malachi 1:6; Isaiah 54:5; Revelation 21:2; Romans 11:33-36; Matthew 6:9; John 16:7-15; Matthew 28:19; HC 24; BC 8

⁷2 Corinthians 5:18-20

⁸Matthew 28:19-20; BC 29; CD 1.2, 1.3, 2.5

⁹Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 13:13

¹⁰Matthew 11:28-30; John 6:37; CD 1.4, 3/4.8

¹¹Matthew 7:13-23; John 3:18, 6:53, 8:24; CD 1.12, 1.13

¹²Isaiah 49:6; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

¹³Isaiah 45:18; John 1:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12

¹⁴Isaiah 53:4-5; Romans 3:25; Galatians 3:13; 1 John 2:2; BC 21; CD 2.2, 2.3

¹⁵2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9; BC 22, 23

¹⁶Romans 3:23-24, 5:1; Galatians 2:16; HC 61; BC 22, 23

¹⁷John 6:53-58; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:1-2 HC 14, 17, 29, 30

¹⁸Romans 10:14-15; see CD 1.17 for related counsel

¹⁹Luke 16:26; John 3:18; Revelation 20:11-15; HC 10; BC 37; CD 1.15

²⁰John 1:14; Colossians 1:15-20; BC 26

The Gift of Sexuality

Marriage is a joyful covenanting between one biological man and one biological woman.²¹ All sexual intimacy is divinely designed for and should be expressed solely within the covenant of marriage.²² Any teaching or practice which blurs gender distinction, such as homosexuality, bisexuality, or trans-sexuality is contrary to Scripture.²³ Same-sex “marriages,” even in committed and consensual relationships, are contrary to Scripture.²⁴ Ordination to the offices of the church for any person who unrepentantly practices or promotes any form of sexual sin, whether fornication, adultery, homosexuality, or the like is to be prohibited.²⁵

The Dignity of Human Life

All human life is to be treasured as a gift from God.²⁶ Any practice which demeans human dignity, such as pornography,²⁷ racism,²⁸ abuse,²⁹ exploitation,³⁰ persecution,³¹ abortion,³² and euthanasia³³ is immoral and unjust.

- Sec. 3 The Congregation upholds the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, the Danvers Statement, and the Nashville Statement as faithful interpretations of Scripture and guiding documents for the faith and life of our members.
- Sec. 4 For the purposes of the Congregation, the Session is the final interpretive authority of the meaning and application of the Bible and our Statements of Faith.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

- Sec. 1 Membership in the Congregation shall be entered into and terminated according to the Book of Church of Order of the Presbyterian Church in America.
- Sec. 2 Discipline of members shall be exercised in accordance with the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America.
- Sec. 3 Voluntary resignation or withdrawal from membership is prohibited once church discipline at the levels of suspension, deposition, or excommunication has been initiated for that member.

²¹The Liturgy: Order of Worship for Christian Marriage

²²Genesis 2:18-25; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Ephesians 5:22-33

²³Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:10; Jude 7; HC 87

²⁴Matthew 19:5

²⁵1 Timothy 5:22; Titus 2:7-8; James 3:1; HC 109

²⁶Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-8; BC 14

²⁷Matthew 5:27-30; HC 109

²⁸Ephesians 2:14-16

²⁹Ephesians 5:28-29

³⁰Amos 5:10-13; HC 110

³¹Matthew 23:29-36

³²Psalm 139:13-16

³³Exodus 20:13; HC 105, 107

- Sec. 4 Persons becoming a member shall be required to sign a statement that they have read and consent to the Congregation's By-laws.
- Sec. 5 Because of the biblical prohibition on lawsuits between believers within the church (1 Corinthians 6:1-8), all members of the Congregation shall agree to submit to binding arbitration for any legal dispute that arises between members or between members and the Congregation itself.

ARTICLE IV – THE SESSION

- Sec. 1 The Session shall be the ruling body of the Congregation with all rights, privileges and responsibilities as laid out in the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America.
- Sec. 2 The Session shall consist of the Teaching Elder(s) and six Ruling Elders. The Session shall meet monthly for its regular business meeting.
- Sec. 3 The Session shall function in accordance with the duties and responsibilities assigned to it in the Book of Church Order.
- Sec. 4 The Session shall at least annually make an evaluation and designation of those communing members who are active and those who are not. Active communing members are those who faithfully partake of the means of grace: the preaching of the Word and participation in the Sacraments.
- Sec. 5 The Session shall be responsible for approving an annual budget prepared by the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE V – THE BOARD OF DEACONS

- Sec. 1 The Board of Deacons shall serve the Session and the Congregation with all rights, privileges and responsibilities laid out in the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America.
- Sec. 2 The Board of Deacons shall consist of six Deacons.
- Sec. 3 The Board should meet monthly for its regular business meeting, or as directed or requested by the Session.
- Sec. 4 The Board of Deacons will provide for an independent review of the congregation's financial matters on an annual basis.

ARTICLE VI – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- Sec. 1 Elections:
- a. The Elders and Deacons shall be chosen from the active male communing members of the Congregation who have attained the age of twenty-one years.
 - b. Elders and Deacons shall be elected from votes by the active communing member of the Congregation who have attained the age of eighteen years.
 - c. Members of the Congregation who choose not to be nominated as Elder or Deacon are instructed to communicate their desire to the church office by October 1st of each year.
 - d. The Session shall request the advice of the Congregation during October by sending to all communing members a list of those men who have not removed themselves from nomination for Elder or Deacon, information outlining the responsibilities of and spiritual gifts necessary for filling these offices, and nominating ballots.

The ballots shall be returned by the last Sunday of October and the results tabulated prior to the November Session meeting.

- e. The Session will use the nomination ballots to assist them in the preparation of a single slate of nominees by the November Session meeting. The Session may combine votes received by a single candidate for both offices, and then make a determination about whether the candidate is better suited to serve as Elder or Deacon.
- f. The Session shall assess the personal and spiritual qualifications of each candidate prior to being placed in nomination.
- g. The single slate of candidates will be presented to the Congregation for affirmation and election at its Annual Congregational Meeting. The names of the nominees shall be published for two weeks prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- h. At the annual Congregational Meeting, a vote will be taken and a simple majority of the ballots cast will elect the slate of nominees.
- i. Absentee ballots for the election of the slate of nominees will be available prior to the Congregational Meeting. Absentee ballots will be counted for the first ballot only. Subsequent voting will be done only by the active communing members present.

Sec. 3 Term:

- a. Elders and Deacons shall serve for a term of three years. Any Elder or Deacon completing a three year term must be off for at least one year before being eligible for re-election.
- b. One-third of the whole number of Elders and Deacons shall be elected annually.

Sec. 4 Vacancies:

- a. Vacancies in the Session or Board of Deacons may be filled by election at the Annual Congregational Meeting or appointed by the Session. The Moderator may call a special Congregational Meeting to fill vacancies.

ARTICLE VII – DIRECTORS AND DUTIES

Sec. 1 The Directors of the Congregation shall be a Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, Chairman of the Deacons, Secretary of the Deacons, and Treasurer of the Deacons.

Sec. 2 The Executive Committee shall consist of the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and Chairman of the Deacons. The Executive Committee may act for the Session between scheduled Session meetings. Any actions taken must be reported to the Session and Board of Deacons in a timely manner.

Sec. 3 Election of Directors:

- a. Election of the Vice-Moderator and Clerk, if needed for the new year, shall be done at the last regularly scheduled Session meeting of the year.
- b. Election of the Chairman of the Deacons, Secretary of the Deacons, and Treasurer of the Deacons, if needed for the new year, shall be done if possible at the Board of Deacon's meeting prior to the last Board of Deacons meeting of the year.

- c. Newly elected, but not yet installed, and returning Session and Board of Deacons members, only, will have the privilege to vote on their respective election of Directors.
- Sec. 4 All appointments of Elder and Deacon members to Ministry Teams shall be made by the incoming Executive Committee. These appointments shall be made prior to the first meeting of the new term of the Officers. Ministry Teams do not have the authority to act on behalf of the Congregation apart from the responsibilities delegated to them by the Session.
- Sec. 5 The Session will be served by following Teams, made up of the Officers and members of the Congregation:
- a. **The Worship Team** exists to provide opportunities to celebrate God's presence by magnifying the Lord and exalting God's name: to advise and assist the pastor and other worship leaders in the planning and evaluation of congregational worship services, as well as to consider whether new opportunities for worship need to be offered to the church and community.
 - b. **The Discipleship Team** exists to help members become disciples who make disciples: to encourage and oversee the life-long process of growing to maturity in the Christian faith and passing it on to others by ensuring that appropriate and attractive growth opportunities are offered for all age groups within the Congregation.
 - c. **The Outreach Team** exists to advance the gospel within Cedar Grove and neighboring communities through the proclamation of the Word and deeds of mercy: by coordinating advertising and promotion of the church, oversee the church's website and keep it up-to-date, providing guidelines for emergency assistance requests, supporting other local ministries, assisting the congregation in exploring and engaging in ways to develop relationships with local unchurched residents, and keeping the congregation informed with the Team's activities and supported ministries.
 - d. **The Mission Team** exists to advance the gospel and support disciple-making primarily among least reached and unreached people groups: by maintaining regular communication with, encouraging, and learning from our supported missionaries and mission agencies; educating our congregation about and encouraging participation in mission; and developing a strategy and guidelines for mission support and trips.
 - e. **The Fellowship Team** exists to include members fully within the church, the Body of Christ: to encourage congregational fellowship and care, to provide hospitality ministries to attendees and church functions, and to assimilate new participants and members fully into all aspects of church life.
 - f. **The Management Team** exists to provide the necessary support to carry out the biblical purposes of the church: to oversee the human, physical, and financial resources of the

Congregation, employing all church resources in a manner that is consistent with biblical notions of stewardship and care for all of God's possessions given for use in fulfilling the purposes of the Church of Jesus Christ.

- Sec. 6 Moderator:
- a. The installed pastor shall be the Moderator of the Session and the Congregation.
 - b. The Moderator shall preside at all meetings except where otherwise provided. The Moderator shall state and explain the business to be transacted, enforce the rules of order, make sure each meeting opens and closes with prayer, and in general, maintain the decorum and dignity belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ.
- Sec. 7 Vice-Moderator:
- a. The Vice-Moderator shall be elected from among the newly-elected and actively serving members of the Session. The term of office will equal his remaining term on the Session.
 - b. The Vice-Moderator shall preside at meetings in the absence of the Moderator.
- Sec. 8 Clerk:
- a. The Clerk shall be elected from among the newly-elected and actively serving members of the Session. The term of office will equal his remaining term on the Session.
 - b. The Clerk shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the Session and Congregation.
 - c. During a pastoral vacancy the Clerk shall keep the records of the church up-to-date.
- Sec. 9 Chairman of the Deacons:
- a. The Chairman of the Deacons shall be elected from among the newly-elected and actively serving members of the Board of Deacons. The term of office will equal his remaining term on the Board of Deacons.
 - b. The Chairman of the Deacons shall assure that the duties and responsibilities prescribed to the Board of Deacons in the Book of Church Order are faithful fulfilled.
 - c. The Board of Deacons may by a majority vote appoint one of its own to temporarily lead the Board in the absence of the Chairman of the Deacons.
- Sec. 10 Secretary of the Deacons:
- a. The Secretary of the Deacons shall be elected from among the newly-elected and actively serving members of the Board of Deacons. The term of office will equal his remaining term on the Board of Deacons
 - b. The Secretary of the Deacons shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Board of Deacons, and of all funds and their distribution.
 - c. The Secretary of the Deacons shall submit the Minutes of the Board to the Session, regularly or upon request of the Session.

- Sec. 11 Treasurer of the Deacons:
- a. The Treasurer of the Deacons shall be elected from among the newly-elected and actively serving members of the Board of Deacons. The term of office will equal his remaining term on the Board of Deacons.
 - b. The Treasurer of the Deacons shall be responsible to oversee and ensure sound financial accounting and record keeping practices for the church.
 - c. The Treasurer of the Deacons may serve as the Congregational Treasurer, or a Congregational Treasurer may be appointed by the Board of Deacons from the active communing members of the Congregation. A thorough review of the Congregational Treasurer's functions will be conducted not less frequently than every five years.
 - d. The Congregational Treasurer is to receive and disburse all offerings and monies of the church with the help of the Board of Deacons and as directed by the Session.
 - e. The Congregational Treasurer shall prepare monthly financial reports for the Officers and for the Congregation. The reports shall include comparisons of actual figures to budgetary figures.
 - f. Additional treasurers may be appointed by the Session in consultation with the Board of Deacons for special needs or functions.

ARTICLE VIII – CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

- Sec. 1 All meetings of the Congregation shall be held in the church building unless otherwise designated by the Session.
- Sec. 2 Notice and purpose of all meetings shall be given to the Congregation at least two Sundays prior to the meeting.
- Sec. 3 Annual Meeting of the Congregation:
- a. There shall be one regular meeting of the Congregation each year, to be convened on the first Sunday of December following the morning worship service, or at another convenient date and time established by the Session.
 - b. The purpose of the Annual Congregational Meeting shall be the election of Elders and Deacons, discussion of the proposed church budget for the next fiscal year, and the consideration of matters, both spiritual and material, which affect the Congregation.
- Sec. 4 Special Meetings of the Congregation shall be called by:
- a. The Session, the purpose being stated along with the required publication of notice.
 - b. The Vice-Moderator on the written request of twelve active communing members of the Congregation, the purpose being stated along with the required publication of notice.
- Sec. 5 All meetings of the Congregation shall be opened and closed with prayer.
- Sec. 6 A quorum for the transaction of business at any Congregational Meeting shall be one-third of the active communing members of the Congregation.

- Sec. 7 Voting Procedures:
- a. Outgoing Session members will be named tellers for the tallying of ballot votes. In their absence, the presiding officer shall appoint tellers.
 - b. Absentee votes shall be permitted on stated issues. Such ballots shall be:
 1. Available upon request from the Clerk or the church office as soon as public notice of the meeting is made.
 2. Sealed in a blank envelope.
 3. The name of the person submitting an absentee vote shall be kept.
 4. Absentee votes must be returned to the Clerk prior to the meeting.
 5. Absentee votes may be counted only on the first ballot.

ARTICLE IX -- FACILITIES AND GROUNDS

- Sec. 1 No use of the Congregation's facilities or grounds shall be inconsistent with its Statements of Faith or the purposes of advancing its Purpose and Mission.
- Sec. 2 Individuals or groups, whether members or non-members, who desire to rent the facilities or grounds must agree to sign and comply with the appropriate Church Usage Policy statement and form.

ARTICLE X – PASTORAL VACANCIES

- Sec. 1 A Search Committee shall be appointed by the Session from the active communing membership, reflecting a representative cross-section of the Congregation.
- Sec. 2 The Search Committee does not have the authority to act on behalf of the Congregation apart from the responsibilities delegated to them by the Session.
- Sec. 3 Pastors who are called by the Congregation must meet the qualifications stipulated in the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America and consent to the Congregation's Doctrinal Standards and Statements of Faith.
- Sec. 4 Procedures for calling a pastor will be consistent with the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America.
- Sec. 5 Approval of a call by the Congregation requires an affirmative vote of at least 2/3 of the active communing members present at the congregational meeting.

ARTICLE XI – RELATIONSHIP TO HIGHER JUDICATORIES

- Sec. 1 Elders serving the second year of their Session term shall be the delegates to the Presbytery of Wisconsin for that year, if possible. Otherwise, the Session shall appoint alternate delegates from among the other Elders of the Congregation.
- Sec. 2 Deacons serving the second year of their Board of Deacons term may be appointed as non-voting representatives to the Presbytery of Wisconsin for that year.

ARTICLE XII – EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

- Sec. 1 All employees shall be required to attest by written signature to their acceptance of the Congregation’s Doctrinal Standards and Statements of Faith, and their commitment to advance the mission of the Congregation.
- Sec. 2 All volunteers shall agree to serve by word and example in a manner consistent with the Congregation’s Doctrinal Standards and Statements of Faith.
- Sec. 3 All employees and volunteers must consent to having a background check prior to their service.

ARTICLE XIII – TAX EXEMPTION

- Sec. 1 The Congregation is a 501(c)(3) organization for educational, charitable, and religious purposes.
- Sec. 2 No part of the net income of the church will result in private inurement to members, officers, or any other persons in the Congregation.
- Sec. 3 The Congregation will not engage in IRS-prohibited political activities.
- Sec. 4 The Congregation will not engage in any activities, except to an insubstantial degree, that fall outside the scope of its tax-exempt purposes.

ARTICLE XIV – IDEMNIFICATION

- Sec. 1 The Congregation shall indemnify any employee, officer, or agent of the Congregation in actions while serving on behalf of the Congregation, if such person(s) acted in good faith and in a manner reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the Congregation, and had no reasonable cause to believe that such action(s) was unlawful.

ARTICLE XV – AMENDMENTS

- Sec. 1 These By-laws may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote at any regular or special Congregational Meeting.
- Sec. 2 All amendments to the By-laws shall go into effect upon a favorable action at a Congregational Meeting.

Adopted: December, 1991
Amended: December, 2002
February, 2003
December, 2004
April, 2013
January, 2016
August, 2019