

Bylaws for City Reformed Presbyterian Church

Preamble

City Reformed Presbyterian Church is a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The practices of our church are governed by the constitution of the PCA, namely the Book of Church Order and the Westminster Confession and the Westminster Shorter and Larger Catechisms. These bylaws are supplements to those standards for our particular local church.

Membership in the PCA is entirely voluntary. If at any time our church feels that the policies and practices of the PCA are seriously out of accord with the Bible, or if there are other compelling reasons, we are free to follow an orderly procedure (described below) to remove our church from that denomination. The head of our church is Jesus Christ, and our highest standard is the Bible, and all matters in our church are ultimately governed by our understanding of the commands of the Bible.

Our church is also a legal entity in regard to the government of the United States and the State of Pennsylvania, called a non-profit corporation. The bylaws of the corporation are a separate document, which is available for all members to read. All members of our church are automatically also members of the corporation, and all active elders on our session are automatically trustees of the corporation.

Congregational Meetings

1. The church shall have at least one meeting once per year, with notice to all members at least one month in advance. Other meetings may be called by the session or by request in writing by a quorum of members as described in the Book of Church Order of the PCA.
2. Part of the annual meeting will be designated the corporation meeting, and the president of the corporation (a ruling elder), will preside over this part of the meeting. Votes of the corporation are needed for changes to the corporate bylaws, for major financial commitments, and for the purchase of real property. Only communicant members over the age of 18 may vote in matters of the corporation.
3. The session of active elders of City Reformed Presbyterian Church has sole authority over the church budget, in accord with the standards of the Presbyterian Church in America. The session shall present the budget to the congregation at the annual meeting, as well as the results of an annual audit of the church finances.
4. All communicant members of the congregation have a vote in extending a call to associate and senior teaching elders (pastors) and in the election of elders and deacons. Assistant pastors and interns are called directly by session, according to the Book of Church Order of the PCA.
5. As stated in the Book of Church Order of the PCA, a quorum for a congregational meeting

shall consist of one fourth of the resident communing members, if the membership is less than 100, and one sixth of the resident communing members if the membership is greater than 100.

Election of Elders and Deacons

1. Once per year the session shall solicit nominations from the membership for men to hold the offices of elder and deacon in the church. The congregation shall have at least one month for submitting nominations. Those making nominations shall consider the requirements of Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9) for elders and deacons, the nominees' understanding of and conformity to the standards of the Presbyterian Church in America, and their experience in leadership in City Reformed Presbyterian Church.
2. A member shall be considered duly nominated if he has been a member of City Reformed Presbyterian Church for more than one year, and nominated by two other members not related to him, in writing to a member of the session of the church.
3. The eligibility of nominees shall be determined by the session of elders in accord with the standards of the Presbyterian Church in America.
4. Notice of nominated and eligible candidates for elder and deacon shall be given to the congregation one month before the congregational meeting at which they are to be elected.
5. Elections of elders and deacons must occur at a properly called congregational meeting with a quorum. The number of elders to be elected shall be determined by a congregational vote after hearing the recommendation of the session.
6. Elders and deacons shall be elected by a majority of voting members present at the meeting. If less than 2/3 of those present vote to approve a candidate, the moderator shall inform the people and encourage them not to proceed when there is a substantial minority opposed to the election. However, if after this information, the majority insists on its rights, the vote shall stand, as required by the Book of Church Order of the PCA.

Women's Council

1. In addition to elders and deacons, our church has a women's council and a Women in the Church (WIC) fellowship. The bylaws for our WIC body are a separate document, which is available for all members to read.
2. Women's council members are elected at an annual meeting of WIC, which is separate from the congregational annual meeting, in accord with the nomination and election process described in the WIC bylaws. As with elders and deacons, those making nominations shall consider the calling of Scripture (1 Tim 3:11, Titus 2:3-5) for spiritually mature women, the nominees' understanding of and conformity to the standards of the PCA, and their experience in leadership in City Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Terms of Office

1. The term of office for an active elder or deacon shall be three years, or shorter if session and the candidate agree. There is no limit to the number of terms an active elder or deacon may serve.
2. Elders or deacons who finish their terms and leave the session or board of deacons, automatically become inactive elders or deacons, respectively. Inactive elders or deacons may assist the active elders in the ministry of the church as spiritual leaders without vote on the session or diaconate board.
3. Active and inactive elders and deacons in good standing according to the standards of the Presbyterian Church in America are automatically qualified to be re-elected for additional terms but must be re-nominated.
4. Elders may be removed without censure by a vote of the congregation, according to the procedures described in the Book of Church Order of the PCA.

Amendments, Complaints, and Withdrawal

1. These bylaws may be amended by a three-fourths majority vote at a properly called congregational meeting with a proper quorum. Proposed amendments must be made known to the congregation one month before the vote.
2. Any member or group of members of the church has the right to file a “complaint” with the local presbytery of the PCA if they feel the session of the church has erred in any decision. A complaint must be filed within 30 days of the alleged error, and must follow the procedures described in the Book of Church Order of the PCA.
3. The congregation may vote to leave the Presbyterian Church in America by a three-fourths majority vote at a properly called congregational meeting with a proper quorum. A proposal to leave the Presbyterian Church in America must be presented in writing to the congregation in writing at least one month before the meeting at which the vote will take place.

Appendix. Relevant sections of the Book of Church Order of the PCA, 2009 edition

Right to withdraw from the denomination: 25-11

Relation of church to corporation: 25-7 to 25-8

Congregational meetings: 25-1 to 25-5

Election of officers: 24-1 to 24-5

Removal of officers without censure: 24-7

Procedure for filing a complaint to presbytery about an action of session: 43-1 to 43-10