

CONSTITUTION OF ST. JAMES CHURCH,
AN EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CONGREGATION

Article I
CREED, FAITH PRACTICE, AND GOVERNANCE

Section 1. Name

The congregation shall be known as St. James Church; an Evangelical and Reformed Congregation of Louisville, Kentucky.

Section 2. Creed

The congregation calls itself “Evangelical” because it holds the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only infallible criterion of faith and life, and it accepts the interpretation of the Holy Scripture as found in the symbolic books of the Lutheran and Reformed churches. These books are “The Confession of Faith” (Westminster Confession of the Reformed Church- 1787-1789 American Revision version), “Luther’s Catechism,” and “The Heidelberg Catechism.” The congregation accepts these only in so far as they agree in their differentiating points allowing everyone freedom of conscience in interpretation. In no case can Section 2 of Article I be altered or amended.

Section 3. Purpose

The avowed purpose of this organization shall be the worship of the triune God, the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the teaching of the Faith and its practical significance, the practice of loving service toward the needy, the building of the kingdom of righteousness, the furtherance of Christian unity, the fulfillment of the gospel in our daily lives, and the promotion of Christian fellowship.

Section 4. Baptism

Baptism is a Sacrament of the Church, instituted by Christ, whereby through the visible sign of water, a public proclamation is made of one’s identification with Jesus Christ and His Church. This church will practice both Believer’s Baptism and the rite called infant baptism by which Christian parents dedicate their children to the Lord and identify them with the Church, anticipating the day when the child will come to a personal acceptance of the saving faith in Christ. At the discretion of the parents, a dedication may take place without the application of water. St. James Church acknowledges Aspersion, i.e. sprinkling with water; Effusion, i.e. pouring of water; and Immersion, i.e. submersing in water, as acceptable modes of Baptism and firmly believes that the exercise of this Sacrament is not a necessary prerequisite or an effective means of one’s salvation.

Section 4a. A person seeking to be baptized shall meet with the pastor. After giving testimony of faith in Christ as personal savior and declaring a desire to follow him as his disciple; the candidates name shall be presented to the church council for its endorsement.

Section 4b. The mode, time, and place of baptism shall be determined by the candidate and the pastor and announced to the congregation prior to the event. Pedito-baptism shall only be offered for children of members.

Section 5. Holy Communion

Holy Communion is a Sacrament of the Church instituted by Christ using the visible signs of Bread, representing His body, and The Cup, representing His blood. When partaken, we remember the death of our Lord Jesus. In the Sacrament, we acknowledge His presence with us but not specifically in the elements of Communion which remain unchanged.

Section 5a. Communion shall be celebrated the first Sunday of each month and on recognized Holy Days of the Liturgical Church Year.

Section 5b. The Pastor shall only be assisted at the Communion service by the members of the congregation.

Section 6. Rite of Confirmation

Only such baptized children as are at least thirteen (13) years of age and have saving knowledge of the Word of God and who show a desire to consecrate themselves to their Lord and Master Jesus Christ shall be presented for confirmation. Exceptions to these requirements may be made at the discretion of the minister.

Section 7. Governance

This Congregation shall be governed by the articles of incorporation and this Constitution.

Section 7a. The supreme legislation and administrative power of the congregation is vested in the congregation itself assembled in meeting, duly and legally called according to Article VIII.

Section 7b. It shall be the prerogative of the congregational meeting to decide such questions as the buying and selling of real property, building projects, extensive repairs of church property, the call of the pastor, the direction of the work of the congregation, and such other powers and prerogatives as may be here in set forth. For the transaction of all other business the administration of the church is entrusted to the Church Council chosen and composed as provided for in this constitution.

Section 8. Upon the dissolution of the Church its assets and all property and interest of which it shall then possess, including any devise, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise made before or after such dissolution shall be transferred to a body or entity determined by a 2/3 majority vote of the members of the congregation present.

Article II MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership in this congregation shall be open to all baptized persons who desire to lead a Christian life and have either been confirmed at St. James Church, received by a letter of transfer from another Christian church, or by profession of faith; and shall acknowledge agreement with the doctrines of this church and the obligations to attend divine worship, participate in Holy Communion and contribute to the support of the Church through their service, tithes and offerings.

Section 2. Such as wish to become members of this congregation must accept its Creed as described in Section 2 of Article I and promise to obey its rules and regulations.

Section 3. Such as wish to become members of the congregation must make application for membership personally through the Minister or one of the members of the Church Council. The application for membership must then be presented for the consideration of the Church Council.

Section 4. Members of the church should

A Strive to live sober, righteous and godly lives and labor faithfully to bring others to Christ.

B. They should take an active part in the life and work of the Church.

- (1) This should include regular attendance at divine worship;
- (2) devout use of the Holy Sacraments;
- (3) diligent observance of private devotions;
- (4) regard for its established law and authority;
- (5) attendance at congregational meetings,
- (6) untiring zeal in bringing the un-churched under its influence, and
- (7) sincere endeavor to apply the teachings of Jesus to all human relationships.

C. Those members who are parents or fulfilling the role of parent should ensure that children are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and when they have attained the required age, to send them to religious instruction so that they may be prepared for confirmation; and having been confirmed, received as members of the church.

Section 5. Only those people who have entered into the covenant of membership at St. James may vote in meetings.

Section 6. All members are entitled to a full share in the fellowship and spiritual blessings of the Church, and to the services of its Pastor, officials and other workers, as well as to the Christian sympathy and support all members.

Section 7. If a member of the congregation shall neglect to partake of the Holy Communion, refuse to contribute to the support of the Church, or be continuously absent from public worship for one year, that member shall be subject to admonition of the Church Council. If after

admonition, said member continues in such neglect of duty, the Council shall notify him or her and his or her name shall be removed from the Church membership.

Section 8. Discipline in cases of conduct deemed un-Christian lies in the hands of the Church Council.

Section 9. Any member who has been expelled as well as one who leaves the church of his or her own free will loses all claim on the Church property which is to remain intact for all times.

ARTICLE III CIVIL OBLIGATIONS

Section 1. Any accusation of misconduct or abuse by a member will be relayed to the Council immediately and without evaluation. Accusations will be reported to civil authorities as the law requires.

Section 2. All paid staff, Church Council members, and members who participate in ministry activities supervising minors will be instructed in safe church policies, procedures, and requirements and will have completed appropriate background checks and insurance registration.

ARTICLE IV THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Section 1. Eight (8) members shall constitute the Church Council. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. Only members who are eighteen (18) years of age and have been members of the church for at least one year can be elected as members of the Church Council.

Section 3. The members of the Church Council are to be elected for a term of two years.

Section 4. No restrictions are made as to the number of times a member can be reelected or the number of successive terms a member can serve on the Council.

Section 5. All members of the Church Council shall be elected at the congregational meeting in December.

Section 6. Nominations shall be made for the Church Council by a committee appointed by the President. Public notice of such nominations shall be given from the pulpit, by bulletin or letter at least one week before the election. Nominations may also be made by members of the congregation at the December meeting, provided that the floor nominee is a member in good standing and has been approached by the nominator and has agreed to serve, if elected.

Section 7. The election shall be in such a manner that the terms of all the members do not expire at one and the same time. One half of the members must be elected annually.

Section 8. Immediately after election, the Church Council shall meet and organize for business, electing a President, a Vice President, a Recording and Corresponding Secretary, a Financial Secretary and a Treasurer.

Section 9. The installation of the newly elected members shall take place in a morning service of the following January.

Section 10. The Church Council shall meet once each month to transact any necessary business. In case of necessity, the President shall have the authority to call an extra meeting.

Section 11. The Church Council shall transact the business of the Church, make provision for the determining and raising of the current expense budget for the congregation as well as for the apportionment of the Church and other benevolent projects, the auditing of financial accounts, and the adequate support of the staff of workers. It shall keep a complete and accurate record of its proceedings, be the custodian of all congregational records and report to the congregation at its regular and special meetings. It shall submit any required documents to the State or any governing body as occasion may require.

Section 12. The Church Council may authorize any extraordinary expense not provided for in the approved budget, but, if that expense exceeds \$3000.00, it must receive the prior approval of the congregation. The highest amount of indebtedness which the congregation may incur is \$100,000.000, as provided for in the Articles of Incorporation.

Section 13. The Church Council shall supervise the activities of the various organizations affiliated with the church. No organization shall be effected without the approval of the said Council. Each organization affiliated with this church, at the request of the Church Council, shall render an annual report in writing of its work and finances.

Section 14. Vacancies on the Church Council shall be filled, for the unexpired term, by appointment of the Council President, with the approval of the Council.

ARTICLE V DUTIES OF CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS

Section 1. The President

It shall be the duty of the Council President to:

A. Preside at all meetings of the Church Council, and at the semi-annual and annual congregational meetings and, with the Financial secretary and/or Treasurer, sign all orders, vouchers, and other necessary documents.

B. The President shall have no vote at Council meetings, except at the elections of officers, and, in cases where a tie vote has been cast, the President shall cast the deciding vote.

C. In the absence of the Pastor, the President shall assist a visiting speaker in conducting the services.

D. The Church Council, through its President, and in consultation with the Pastor, shall appoint such special committees as it may deem necessary for the accomplishment of its work.

E. The President is an ex-officio member of all committees.

Section 2. The Vice President

It shall be the duty of the Council Vice-President to:

A. In the absence of the Council President, as President pro tempore, assume the duties of the President.

B. Fill any and all unexpired terms of the Council President which may be caused by the death, resignation, or expulsion of the President.

Section 3. Recording and Corresponding Secretary

It shall be the duty of the Recording and Corresponding Secretary to record the minutes of all Church Council and Congregational meetings.

Section 4. Financial Secretary

It shall be the duty of the Financial Secretary:

A. To have knowledge of all church financial assets and liabilities, to sign bill vouchers, and to be able to fill in for the treasurer in regard to bill payment, tax preparation, and monetary deposits.

B. To keep a record of the money received, by recording individual giving, and preparing annual giving statements for church members for tax purposes, either through the envelope system or otherwise.

C. To keep a record of all expenses and organize an annual audit of the Church's financial books.

D. To meet monthly with the Treasurer to go over the financial concerns of the Church, including income, expenses, and banking issues.

E. To monitor use of the credit card on a monthly basis. Church credit cards are to be used only for Council approved church business. The Council will determine who receives a church credit card. No one may be added to the credit card account without Council approval.

Section 5. Treasurer

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to:

A. Receive all money given to the church, after such is verified by, at least, two (2) members of the congregation.

B. To deposit all money of the Church in the name of St. James Church and shall be responsible for all of the Church's banking issues.

C. To pay all bills, after vouchers for same have been signed by two (2) of the following: President, Financial Secretary, or Vice President.

D. Either the Treasurer or Financial Secretary shall prepare all vouchers.

E. To render a report at the annual congregational meeting and other meetings, as directed by the Council President.

F. To be responsible for the preparation and filing of all required tax documents.

ARTICLE VI
PASTOR OR MINISTER

Section 1. Qualifications, Duties and Privileges of the Pastor or Minister

In case of a vacancy, only such minister shall be chosen who:

A. Is either seminary trained or demonstrates pastoral experience sufficient to assume the role of minister at the discretion of the Church Council;

B. Comes well recommended as a true Christian and as capable of discharging all duties connected with this office, and;

C. Pledges to be governed by the Constitution of this congregation and Church.

Section 2. The Minister shall be elected for an indefinite term.

Section 3. The Minister shall:

A. Be or become a member of the Evangelical Association and maintain such membership in good standing.

B. Conduct the office as an Ambassador of Christ and according to the precepts of Jesus and his Disciples.

C. Conduct all public services on Sunday and holy days, administer the Holy Sacraments, and officiate at all services required by members of the congregation.

D. Make pastoral calls on all the members and, especially the sick, as defined by the terms of call agreed to by the Minister and Church Council.

E. Look after the spiritual training and instruction of the young.

F. Keep a record of all baptisms, marriages, funerals and confirmations.

Section 4. The Minister is entitled to one or more vacations as defined by the terms of Call.

Section 5. No visiting Minister shall occupy the pulpit of this congregation without the consent of, at least, two (2) members of the Church Council.

Section 6. In case of death, resignation, or expulsion of the Minister, the vacancy shall be filled in harmony with the rules and regulations of the Evangelical Association.

Section 7. In case of the resignation of the Minister, the Minister may be required to remain up to three (3) months after resignation, solely at the discretion of the Church Council.

Section 8. It shall be the responsibility of a Pastoral Committee of the Church, appointed by the President and approved by the Church Council, to seek a candidate for a vacancy in the office of Pastor.

Section 9. Minister candidates shall be invited by the congregation, through the Pastoral Search Committee, to preach trial sermons on Sundays agreeable to both parties.

Section 10. When a Minister has preached a trial sermon, the vote of the congregation must be taken before another Minister can be invited for a trial sermon. The majority vote of the congregation shall be final. If elected, the Church Council shall tender the successful candidate a Letter of Call.

Section 11. In the Call, the terms of the pastoral relationship are stated. The Minister and the Church shall each receive a copy of the Call.

Section 12. When a minister accepts the Call, a Service of Installation shall be arranged.

Section 13. The Pastor or Pastors are ex-officio members of all organizations within the congregation.

ARTICLE VII OBLIGATIONS OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE MINISTER

Section 1. Members of the congregation pledge themselves:

A. To willingly accept the admonitions of their minister.

B. To pay their minister a yearly salary in monthly installments, the amount of this salary to be agreed upon by the Church Council and ratified by the congregation.

ARTICLE VIII CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1. The regular congregational meetings, also all elections, whether of a Minister or members of the Church Council, shall be announced in the service bulletin on two (2) Sundays preceding such meeting or election.

Section 2. There shall be congregational meetings held each year. The Church Council shall decide the specific date of all such meetings.

Section 3. A special meeting of the congregation shall be held in the month of December to adopt the budget for the upcoming year and to elect new Church Council members. The regular annual meeting of the congregation, usually, shall be held in the month of January of each year. At this meeting, the officers of the Church Council and the Pastor shall submit their reports. Other organizations also may be requested to report by the Church Council. At this meeting, business pertinent to the welfare of the congregation may also be considered.

Section 3a. Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Church Council or by petition, signed by not less than twenty-five (25) percent of the active members, to the Council. It shall be incumbent upon the Council to call said special meeting within two (2) weeks from receipt of such petition, and timely notice of such meeting shall be sent to the membership in the same manner as provided in Section 1 above.

Section 4. All voting, whether for Minister or members of the Church Council, shall be done by secret ballot.

Section 5. Twenty-five (25) members found to be in good standing according to the membership requirements in Article II herein shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any and all business.

Section 6. Roberts Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution.

ARTICLE IX CHURCH BUILDING USAGE

Section 1. Any member or individual desiring the use of the church building for any purpose must make his or her wishes or desires known to the Church Council. (An exception is made with regard to funerals)

Section 2. Non-members of the congregation requesting use of the church building must have the consent of the Church Council and are required to pay a fee, as determined by the Church Council, and sign the appropriate acknowledgment of the rules governing use of the facility.

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This Constitution can be altered or amended at any time that two-thirds of the members present vote for such changes, provided the proposed alterations or amendments do not conflict with the word of God. In no case, however, can Section 2 of Article I be altered or amended.

Section 2. Amendments to the Constitution shall be presented in writing at either a regularly called meeting of the congregation or at any time to the Church Council. Said amendments shall be considered at the next regular meeting of the congregation, or at a specially called meeting.