



**DANDRIDGE
COMMUNITY CHURCH**

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

Dandridge Community Church Constitution & Bylaws

Approved 3/18/2025

Revised 6/21/2025

PREAMBLE:

By the grace and providence of God, Dandridge Community Church (DCC) in Dandridge, Tennessee, has been established by the Lord Jesus Christ as a local church¹ within the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.² As such it is our purpose to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.³ We seek to do this through reverent and joyful worship,⁴ preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ⁵ and rightly administering the sacraments He has instituted,⁶ as well as by proclaiming the gospel and manifesting the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ⁷ in our homes, church, community, and world. We believe the whole counsel of God⁸ concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life,⁹ is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture:¹⁰ unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by supposed new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.¹¹ All things must be done properly, for edification and in an orderly manner.¹² To these ends, we do hereby submit ourselves to the following Constitution as a means to govern the affairs of this church.¹³

¹ Acts 8:1; 13:1; Matt. 16:18; 18:17

² Acts 14:26-27; 15:1-33; Heb. 12:22-24

³ WCF/SC:1.1

⁴ Ps. 92:1-4; 96:8-9; LBCF XXVII

⁵ Acts 8:11-13; 2 Cor. 4:5-6

⁶ LBCF XXVIII.1-5

⁷ Matt. 6:9-15; 28:18-20; Acts 8:11-13; Col. 3:1-17

⁸ Acts 20:26-28

⁹ 2 Pet. 1:1-11

¹⁰ LBCF I.6

¹¹ LBCF I.1-10

¹² I Cor. 14:36-40, 22-25

¹³ CREC Constitution Article II.D.1.a

Article I. Name

This church body shall be known as Dandridge Community Church¹⁴ (DCC).

Article II. Standards

A. Primary Standards

DCC is a body of Christian believers who are united for the chief purpose of glorifying¹⁵ the Triune God¹⁶ by striving to proclaim and obey His revelation as found in the 66 books of the Holy Scriptures. As the inspired, inerrant, infallible, and comprehensive rule of faith and practice for the Christian, the Scriptures are recognized by DCC as the unchallengeable authority and supreme judge to which all religious controversies or creeds, as well as all opinions and regulations of men, must be subordinate.¹⁷

B. Secondary Standards

We, as a congregation, affirm the following ecumenical creeds of the church: the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Definition of Chalcedon. We, as a congregation in a corporate sense, not necessarily as individuals,¹⁸ also embrace (without strict subscription) these secondary standards of the historic Reformed Churches: the London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689), the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), the Belgic Confession (1561), the Baptist Catechism (1695), the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms (1647), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and the Canons of Dort (1619).

Should any conflict arise between this Constitution and any of the above standards (or between the above standards themselves), the controlling authority for resolution of the conflict shall be, in this order:

1) Scripture

¹⁴ In the New Testament the local churches were known by the name of the town or region to which they belonged (Acts 8:1; 11:22; 13:1, Rev. 2-3). During the course of history Christendom has been plagued with error, heresy, and apostasy; since the same is true in our day, designations matter. Our commonality with some Baptist churches may only be in relation to credobaptism while with others we might share a true conscription to the 2nd London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689).

As early as the writing of John the Beloved's first epistle the church was being instructed to guard against receiving people who professed to be Christians but denied what was true regarding the nature of Christ and their own nature as well (I John 1). That is why distinctions are important.

¹⁵ WCF/SC:1:1

¹⁶ LBCF II.1-3

¹⁷ LBCF I.1-10

¹⁸ Subscription is not required but all members must understand and submit to the fact that the secondary standards represent the understanding of the historic reformed church and that no member shall propagate contradictory doctrine in the congregation.

2) The Secondary Standards denoted above

3) This Constitution

The Session is to adjudicate and resolve alleged conflicts or controversies pertaining to such allegations. The Session shall always be the first court of adjudication before any recourse is made to higher courts.¹⁹

Article III. Membership

A. Initiation of Membership

1. An individual, normally in our geographical region, is eligible for membership when that individual has been lawfully baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and does not contradict his profession through his manner of life. Members receive all the rights of church membership (including the partaking of communion, pastoral oversight, instruction, and government by the church). The Session will seek correspondence and a letter of transfer from the previous church²⁰ (if applicable) and meet with the prospective member to discuss the privileges and responsibilities of membership in DCC. Prospective members will then stand before the church and, after giving a profession of their faith, recite the Membership Covenant together with the body, becoming members thereafter.²¹ The Session oversees a membership list, which includes names, baptisms, and communicant status.

Our baptism vows are:

- Do you believe that you were conceived and born in sin and therefore a child of wrath, by nature wholly incapable of doing any good and prone to all evil; and that you, in thought, word and deed, have frequently broken the commandments of the Lord?
- Do you sincerely repent of your sins?
- Do you trust in God's covenant promises, which are proclaimed in the Old and New Testaments, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation?

¹⁹ Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1-2; Heb. 13:17

²⁰ Rom. 16:1-2

²¹ Josh. 24:15; Eph. 5:22-24; 6:1-3. One exception to this rule is in the case of a baptized infant who has transferred membership to DCC. In that case, the Head of Household would speak on behalf of the infant.

- Are you firmly resolved, in humble reliance upon divine grace, to study God's Word and the doctrines of our holy religion, to pray, to participate in the corporate worship of our Lord, to seek to lead a Christian life, forsaking the world and its evil lusts, as is becoming to the members of Christ and of His Church, and to submit cheerfully at all Christian admonitions?

[To the Congregation:]

- As a Congregation of Christ, do you undertake the responsibility of assisting this (brother/sister) in (his/her) Christian walk, endeavoring to pray, encourage and admonish for the sake of the fellowship and calling of the Kingdom?

Signify by saying: "Amen!"

Our membership vows are:

- Do you openly accept God's covenant promises, proclaimed in the Old and New Testaments, which have been signified and sealed unto you in your baptism, and will you faithfully endeavor to perfect your baptism until the Day of Jesus Christ, confessing that you abhor and humble yourself before God because of your sins, and that you seek your life not in yourself, but only in Jesus Christ our Savior?
 - Do you swear in the name of God to support the ministry of Dandridge Community Church in its worship and work, submitting to its government and discipline, according to the Scriptures and defined by the Constitution and Bylaws of Dandridge Community Church, while pursuing its purity and peace?
2. Any wife of a non-Christian who follows the procedure above (Article III.A.1) is welcomed into membership. In addition, those family members under her covenantal headship (children living at home) are also members, with the following exceptions: Any of her older children who, in the determination of the Session, lacks a credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or who expresses a well-reasoned and sincere desire not to be a member of DCC, will not be accepted into membership.
 3. Children born to, or adopted by, member parents, upon baptism will automatically be enrolled as members.
 4. If another church has disciplined one of its members, and that person subsequently comes to DCC, the Session will decide whether to honor the discipline of the other church after due consultation with the person concerned and after all appropriate information is sought from the disciplining church.

5. DCC allows prospective members ‘visitation rights’ for up to twelve (12) months. This length of time should normally be sufficient for visitors to know enough about our doctrine and practice to make an informed decision to join the church. Allowances can be made if prospective members are in a deliberate dialogue with the parish pastor regarding the understanding of doctrine and practice.

B. Expectation of Members

1. Members of DCC shall devote themselves to both the private and public means of grace, including the regular attendance of worship services. Members of this church who shall willfully, without plausible reason or excuse, consistently absent themselves from the Lord’s Day worship at DCC shall be subject to the steps of church discipline.
2. Members of DCC shall, in primary obedience to God’s Word and in thankfulness for God’s gifts to us,²² recognize, respect, and submit to the Session of DCC in matters of faith and practice.
3. Members of DCC shall in obedience to God’s Word and in thankfulness for God’s gifts to us, honor and support the office and work of the Diaconate.
4. Members of DCC shall in obedience to God’s Word and in thankfulness for God’s gifts to us, regularly and cheerfully give their tithes and offerings toward the ministry and labor of this church.
5. Members of DCC shall, in obedience to God’s Word and in thankfulness for God’s gifts to us, be diligent to honor their oaths and vows so as not to profane the name of the Lord God Almighty.²³
6. Members of DCC shall affirm they will abide by the DCC Constitution and Bylaws of the church.

C. Voting Members

In the ongoing effort of continuing to reform the church, especially with regard to how significant decisions are made—not simply by the whims or affections of a designated majority and not to the exclusion of the warnings or fears of a potential disfranchised minority; nor giving in to the trappings of congregationalism but remaining apostolic in leadership—‘voting’ will consist in the leaders leading and every voting member, including the officers, speaking for the benefit of the sacred community. All heads of household will vote for their household (the husband and wife being one vote). Furthermore, since voting is the duty of adults, only those unmarried children

²² Heb. 13:17

²³ Gen. 24:1-9; Ex. 20:16; Ps. 15:4; Matt. 23:22; Heb. 6:13-17

who are of adult age twenty (20), and who are living independently outside the household of their parents, will be permitted a separate vote.

The process below seeks to allow everyone's voice to be heard which is staged according to the working definition of the word vote:

A usually formal expression of opinion or will in response to a proposed decision; especially: one given as an indication of approval or disapproval of a proposal, motion, or candidate for office. A formal indication of a choice between two or more candidates or courses of action, expressed typically through a ballot or a show of hands or by voice.

In parliamentary procedure, voting follows after the discussion of a seconded motion. The time allowed for discussion can (for those who oppose the motion and for those who should be allowed the potential benefit of hearing the opposition's reasoning) be compromised by interruption, insufficient time, etc. Our focus is to allow for any opposition to have a sufficient time for their *opinion, will, voice, show of hands, vote* to be heard.

After the allotted time, as stated in areas that call for voting, a general vote will be taken and after there has been opportunity for every voice to be heard the Session shall determine the best course for the benefit of the sacred community.

1. All members in good standing at DCC who are the head of a household, who are in regular attendance at DCC and who, in the determination of the Session, are capable of sound judgment, are eligible to vote in matters relating to DCC. Each will, regardless of family size, have one vote.
2. Suspension of Voting Privilege
 - a) Any head of household being suspended from participation in the Lord's Table shall also have his voting rights suspended until such time as he is restored to the Table. In the event that a head of household is under church discipline (barred from the Table), the nearest adult member of the household, assuming he or she is not under discipline as well, may vote for the household in his place.
 - b) Any head of household who changes his beliefs or practices so as to no longer to be in accord with the membership covenant of DCC may have his voting privilege suspended.

D. Termination of Membership

The names of members shall be removed from the rolls of the church only by order of the Session on the basis of death, transfer to the care of another church, or excommunication.

1. A member may request, in writing, a transfer to another church citing biblical and confessional reasons. When it is so requested, the Session may grant the member in

good standing a letter of transfer to the fellowship of another church. This shall be done in a timely and Christ-honoring manner.

2. In the event of relocation outside of the geographic area in which DCC meets for worship a transfer of membership is required to another church that proves to be a Bible believing and evangelical church. This shall be done in a timely and Christ-honoring manner.
3. No such letter of transfer may be given to a member who is under the formal discipline of the church.
4. Whenever a transfer takes place, the Session of DCC shall maintain responsibility and jurisdiction over the departing member until he is received into the membership of another church.

Article IV. Called Meetings

A. Purpose

Called meetings shall normally be convened for one of four purposes:

1. The selection of Pastors, Elders, and Deacons.²⁴
2. The consideration of any changes to this document.
3. Informational meetings to discuss items selected by the Elders or Deacons. This shall include an annual meeting held in the first quarter of each year to discuss the finances of the church, including an annual budget.
4. The removal from office of Elders or Deacons.
 - a) Acts 6:1-7
 - b) Members are strongly encouraged to attend such meetings so as to be kept informed of the wellbeing of the sacred community.

B. Manner in Which Meetings are Called and Conducted

1. The congregation shall normally be advised by the Session at least two weeks in advance of such meetings.
2. The meeting shall be called by the Session and moderated by the Diaconate.

²⁴ Acts 6:1-7

3. Heads of households not present may vote by proxy.
4. Minutes of these meetings shall be kept, either in writing or by means of audio recording. A secretary shall be assigned by the consistory (the combined Session and Diaconate).

Article V. Officers

A. Ordination

1. Ordination is the authoritative admission of one called to an office in the Church, accompanied with examination, prayer and the laying on of hands.²⁵
2. All ordinations must be in accordance with this constitution and the by-laws of the Presbytery.
3. Only males shall be admitted to ordination and church office.²⁶
4. The offices requiring ordination are:
 - a) Pastor
 - b) Elder
 - c) Deacon
5. Those who have been recognized by the Church to have been called and equipped by God²⁷ to hold office in the Church are to be ordained by the Session. The Session shall keep a record of any exceptions to the secondary standards of the historic reformed church held by candidates for ordination.

Our ordination vows are:

- Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

²⁵ 1 Tim. 4:14, 22; 2 Tim. 1:6

²⁶ 1 Tim. 2:12

²⁷ 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:7-9

- Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Ecumenical Creeds and the secondary standards of the historic reformed church as cited in Article II.B, with noted exceptions, as setting forth the system of doctrine taught by the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption and reaffirmation of this ordination vow?
- Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of this church and the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches as in conformity with the general principles of biblical government?
- Do you, _____, receive the office of Elder/Deacon in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life; also to submit yourself, in case you should become delinquent either in doctrine or life, to ecclesiastical discipline, according to the public ordinance of the churches?
- Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
- Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the church?

When these vows are taken, the congregation will respond with “Amen” when asked:

- Do you, the members of this congregation, acknowledge and receive _____ as Elder/Deacon, and do you promise to yield to them all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which their office, according to the Word of God and the constitution of this church, entitles them?

Signify by saying: “Amen!”

6. DCC distinguishes ordination from commissioning or licensure. The church invests a man with ecclesiastical office (whether an elder or deacon) by the rite of ordination and the laying on of hands. Ordination of an elder confers the office of elder, which together with the other elders (Session), entails responsibility for church administration, caring for the flock, prayer, preaching the Word, and administering the sacraments. The Session may from time to time carry out their responsibility by commissioning or licensing qualified men (usually trainees or retirees) to preach the Word and administer the sacraments under the Session’s watch and care.

B. Powers and Duties of the Officers

1. The authority and duties of the Session shall be, in general, those entailed in pursuing or securing the aims and objectives of the church.

2. The duties of the Diaconate shall be to assist the church in the work of the ministry; in general, to manage the financial, physical, social and benevolent functions of the church, under the oversight of the Session. The Diaconate may also assist the pastors and Session in distributing the elements involved in the Supper.
3. The Session shall be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church; they shall assist in ministering the sacraments of the church and shall make the necessary provisions for it.
4. The Session shall inquire concerning, and approve, all visiting speakers, special meetings, and other events in which the church takes part.

C. Initiation of Office

1. Any member of DCC, including an officer, may notify the Session of a man they think should be evaluated and trained as a potential officer. All Elders and Deacons of this church shall (a) be selected from members of the church, (b) be in accord with the doctrinal beliefs set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws, and (c) not be a member of any secret fraternal organization.
2. Should the Session concur with this recommendation, the officers will train and evaluate the man for office in the church. As part of this process, the officers will examine him with regard to his doctrine, manner of life, and understanding of the secondary standards of the historic reformed faith as listed in Article II.B. All candidates must meet the qualifications for office set down in Scripture.
3. The offices DCC recognizes are Pastor, or Pastors; Ruling Elders; and Deacons.
4. If, after this process of evaluation and training, the Session believes the man may be called to serve as an officer at DCC, they shall convene at least two called meetings.
 - a. In the first meeting, the congregation will be given the opportunity to ask the candidate questions.
 - b. In between the first and second meeting, the Session will seek the godly wisdom, counsel, and input of the congregation regarding the candidate. Anyone who believes the candidate fails to meet the biblical qualifications for office shall be required to raise his concerns first with the candidate, preferably before the second meeting, when possible. If the concerns are not resolved, both men will speak with the Session about the issue. The Session shall bring the issue to resolution.

- c. In the second meeting clarification will be given regarding any previously asked questions or issues that have arisen and a vote will be taken.
5. After any and all issues have been brought to resolution, and it has been determined that the candidate meets all qualifications, the Session will ordain and/or install the man through the laying on of hands and prayer during a subsequent meeting of the church.
6. Adequate time must be given for the appropriate examination of all candidates before the call for a congregational meeting. “Adequate time” is defined as fourteen (14) calendar days unless expressly waived by both Session and Congregational vote.

D. Term of Office

The offices of Elder and Deacon are perpetual in nature.²⁸ Officers will serve for as long as they desire²⁹ barring the exceptions of: deposition by disciplinary action, proving destitute of gifts, an incapacitating sickness or infirmity, or a move from locality. However, some men may become inactive in their office for a period of time.³⁰

E. Removal From Office

An Elder or Deacon may be removed from office if his services do not appear to be edifying to the cause of Christ, or if he has violated his ordination vows. Members of the congregation who perceive the need for removal of an officer, shall communicate this to the Session. The Session shall notify the officer of the perception of the need for his removal. He shall be given opportunity to present his case for remaining in office to the Session. If the Session desires to proceed with removal, they shall convene at least two called meetings to present the case to the congregation and give their evaluation of the need for removal.

1. In the first meeting members of the congregation will be given the opportunity to ask the Session questions regarding the officer in question.
2. Between the first and second meeting the Session will seek the godly wisdom, counsel, and input of the congregation.
3. In the second meeting clarification will be given regarding any previously asked questions or issues that have arisen and a vote will be taken.

²⁸ 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9

²⁹ 1 Tim. 3:1

³⁰ See Article V.F “Resignation from Office or Leave of Absence”

After receiving this input, the Session will proceed with removal if necessary.

F. Resignation from Office or Leave of Absence

If an Elder or Deacon desires to resign his office or take a leave of absence, he must present a letter to the Session formally making known his request and explaining his reasons. Acceptance of a resignation or approval of a leave of absence will be granted only for reasons deemed weighty by the Session.

The Session may notify the congregation of their receipt of the letter, and may provide for a period of comment by the congregation. They may also call a voting members meeting to discuss the matter. If the Session approves the request, they shall notify the congregation of their actions.

The man authorized for a leave of absence will be reinstated to the full function of the office only by approval of the Session. Should a man that has resigned his office seek to return, he can be reinstated after following the provisions of Article V.C of this Constitution.

If a resignation or leave of absence is sought for reasons of moral or doctrinal defect or corruption, then the Session may exercise biblical discipline prior to, and in conjunction with, any consideration of the letter of resignation or leave of absence.

Article VI: Conflict Resolution

This church is committed to resolving, in a biblical manner, all disputes that may arise within our body. This commitment is based on God's command that Christians should strive earnestly to live at peace with one another³¹ and that when disputes arise, Christians should resolve them according to the principles set forth in Holy Scripture.³² We believe that these commands and principles are obligatory on all Christians and essential for the well-being and work of the Church. Therefore, any and all disputes in this church shall be resolved according to biblical principles, as provided in these Bylaws. If there is a conflict between the Bylaws and the CREC, the terms and dictates of the CREC shall be followed.

A. Church Member Conflict Resolution Process

When a member of this church has a conflict with, or is concerned about the behavior of another member, he shall attempt to resolve the matter as follows, and in this order unless unable to do so due to lack of communication by the other party or fear of imminent harm:

³¹ Matt. 5:9; John 17:20-23; Rom. 12:18; and Eph. 4:1-3

³² Prov. 19:11; Matt. 5:23-25; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Gal. 6:1

1. The offended or concerned person shall prayerfully examine himself and take responsibility for his contribution to a problem,³³ and he shall prayerfully seek to discern whether the offense is so serious that it cannot be overlooked;³⁴ and
2. If the offense is too serious to overlook, the offended or concerned person shall go, repeatedly if necessary, and talk to the offender in an effort to resolve the matter personally and privately, having first confessed his own wrongdoing;³⁵ and
3. If the offender will not listen and if the problem is too serious to overlook, the offended or concerned person shall return with one or two other people who will attempt to help the parties resolve their differences;³⁶ these other people may be members or officers of the church, or other respected Christians in the community. At the request of either party to the dispute, the church shall make every effort to assist the parties in resolving their differences and being reconciled.

Article VII. Discipline

A. Informal Discipline

The ordinary course of discipline is informal. Members are encouraged to self-discipline, overlooking the failings of others in love, and encouraging other members to covenant faithfulness.

B. Formal Discipline

Any member may be disciplined by the church. Formal church discipline is applied through the formal action and judgment of the Session. The pattern of church discipline, except in cases of scandal requiring immediate action, will generally follow: formal private admonishment; formal public admonishment; suspension from the Supper; a formal hearing; excommunication.

C. Initial Procedures of Formal Discipline

The Session shall establish the specific procedures for all formal discipline on a case-by-case basis, as appropriate to the circumstances and individuals involved. However, at minimum these procedures should include a clear and timely warning of the individual that he is in the process of formal discipline, two or more visits or communications involving two or three

³³ Matt. 7:3–5.

³⁴ Prov. 19:11; Prov. 12:16; 15:18; 17:14; 20:3; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13; 1 Pet. 4:8

³⁵ Matt. 18:15

³⁶ Matt. 18:16

witnesses, and clear recorded and/or minutes of the entire proceedings kept by the Session, seeking at all times to follow the principles given in Matthew 18.³⁷

D. Trial Procedures

When the Session determines that a hearing is necessary, they will establish the specific procedures for each trial on a case-by-case basis, as appropriate to the circumstances and individuals involved. However, at a minimum, these procedures should include informing the accused in writing of the specific charges, the time, place, and date of the trial, and ample time for the accused to prepare a defense.

The heads of households will be informed of the hearing via a meeting called at the first opportunity. At the hearing, one of the Elders will present a solemn charge from the Scriptures on the responsibilities of those present, the evidence against the accused will be presented, and the accused will have time to make a reasonable defense, including the right to question any witnesses. If, however the accused fails to appear, they will be considered in contempt of the court and the hearing will continue.

At a separate meeting of the Session, a vote will be taken on each of the charges. The Session will declare its verdict to the congregation on an appointed Lord's Day, following an appropriate exhortation. The accused will be given a written copy of the verdict.

The Session will establish an official file containing all the records pertaining to the hearing, including all pertinent correspondence, transcripts, and minutes. If requested, the accused will be given one copy of this file at the expense of the church. Any appeals to the Presbytery will be conducted in accordance with the Constitution of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches.

E. Restoration from Formal Discipline

Formal Discipline will end when the opinion of the Session is that the one under discipline has repented. If a formal public admonishment has been made, a confession of this repentance will be read or may be reported to the congregation on the Lord's Day, and the Session shall formally announce the end of the discipline and restoration of fellowship.

F. Waiver of Legal Recourse and Internal Dispute Resolution

By becoming a member of Dandridge Community Church (DCC), and as a condition of continued membership, all members expressly waive, release, and covenant not to sue Dandridge Community Church, its officers, elders, deacons, employees, or agents (collectively, "Church Parties") in any civil court of law for any claim, injury, or damages arising from or related to:

³⁷ Matthew 18 is in regards to your brother sinning against you, not a heinous sin and flight.

1. Any process or outcome of church discipline, including but not limited to, dismissal from fellowship, excommunication, or public statements to the congregation at any stage of church discipline.
2. Disclosures made for reasons specified in Article VIII of these bylaws.

Instead, members agree to exclusively pursue all such disputes through the internal dispute resolution processes established within these bylaws and, if applicable, the appeals process of the CREC denomination, as the exclusive and final remedies.

Furthermore, members of this church who are currently under formal church discipline, as described within these bylaws, forfeit and waive any right to unilaterally resign from membership or otherwise terminate membership during the period of said discipline. Transfers of membership from DCC are solely possible for church members who are in good standing and who are not under any form of disciplinary action by the church. This provision is intended to ensure the integrity of the church's disciplinary process and the spiritual accountability of its members.

Article VIII: Confidentiality

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.³⁸ It also forbids gossip,³⁹ invites confession,⁴⁰ and encourages people to seek needed counseling.⁴¹ 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. Through emphasis, the Pastor(s) and Elders shall carefully protect all information that they receive through their ministry, subject to the following guidelines in A.

A. Disclosure of Confidential Information Under Unique Circumstances

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

- When a pastor or elder is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other pastors or elders in this church or, if the person attends another church, from the pastors or elders of that church;⁴²

³⁸ Matt. 7:12

³⁹ Prov. 16:28; 26:20

⁴⁰ Prov. 11:13; 28:13; James 5:16

⁴¹ Prov. 20:19; Rom. 15:14

⁴² Prov. 11:14; 13:10; 15:22; 19:20; 20:18; Matt. 18:15-17

- When the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in danger of serious harm unless others intervene.⁴³ Members must always act in accordance with civil disclosure laws; or
- When a person refuses to repent of sin and it then may become necessary for the church to institute disciplinary proceedings⁴⁴ or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church⁴⁵ including civil authorities.

Article IX. Property

All property shall be held in the name of Dandridge Community Church.

Since the Scriptures affirm that the tithe is to be given to the Elders of the church, and since the Session oversees the use of all tithe moneys and gifts to the church, upon dissolution of DCC, its property and resources shall be held jointly by the officers, and administered by the Session for the purpose of advancing Christ's kingdom on earth.

Article X. Modification of the Constitution

If it is the consensus of the Session that Amendments to this Constitution are needed the Session shall convene at least two called meetings.

1. In the first meeting the section(s) of the constitution under question shall be read aloud and the congregation shall be given opportunity to ask questions and give their input.
2. In between the two meetings, the Session shall seek the godly wisdom, counsel, and input of the congregation. Any member with ongoing concern shall speak to the Session regarding those concerns at this time.
3. In the second meeting, the section(s) being amended shall be read aloud and the congregation given opportunity to ask questions and give their input.

Formalization and ratification comes only by vote of the Session.

The Session of the church shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another. Any change of this location shall be recorded by the Clerk of the Session on these bylaws in this section, or this section may be amended by the process and terms described further, herein.

⁴³ Prov. 24:11-12

⁴⁴ Matt. 18:15-20

⁴⁵ Rom 13:1-5

Article XI. Affiliation

Dandridge Community Church is a Mission Church of St. Peter Presbyterian Church in the Augustine Presbytery of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC) and, as such, receives the respective CREC governing documents as binding along with the DCC Constitution.

Article XII: Indemnification of Officers

The Session may choose to indemnify any officer, employee, or agent of the church and, further, to advance any expenses for that indemnification related to that person(s) church-related role or activity.

A. Indemnification of Designated Leaders

The church shall indemnify any pastor, elder or deacon or former pastor, elder or deacon of the church against claims, liabilities, expenses, and costs necessarily incurred by him in connection with the defense, compromise, or settlement of any action, suit or proceeding, civil, administrative or criminal, in which such person is made a party by reason of being or having been a pastor, elder, or deacon, to the extent not otherwise compensated, indemnified or reimbursed by insurance, if:

- The conduct of the pastor, elder or deacon was in good faith and in accordance with those duties, positions, activities and statements of belief supported by this church and/or included in these bylaws;
- The pastor, elder or deacon reasonably believed that his conduct was in the best interests of the church, or at minimum, not opposed to its best interests; and
- In the case of any criminal proceeding, the pastor, elder or deacon had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.

B. Limitations on Indemnification

This church may not indemnify a pastor, elder, or deacon in connection with a proceeding brought against him by or in the right of the church, in which he was adjudged liable to the church, or where the pastor, elder, or deacon is charged with receiving an improper personal benefit and he is adjudged liable on that basis.

C. Insurance Coverage

The Session is authorized to obtain insurance coverage to implement the provisions of this By-law for any officer or member of the church as they deem appropriate.

Appendix I Transferring Infants

Dandridge Community Church is a credobaptist church. However, denying that baptism is without any kind of efficacy, and recognizing the authority of other churches with paedobaptist convictions, we welcome all who are baptized and in good standing in the Church of Jesus Christ into our body. This includes those whom we would not have baptized ourselves.

In the event that we receive infants or children who are unable to speak and provide a confession of faith before the church, the following vows will be presented to the head of a household on behalf of the prospective church member:

When the vows are presented to the head of a household, he will also be asked if he speaks on behalf of his household. When these vows are taken, the congregations will respond with “Amen” when asked:

- As a Congregation of Christ, do you receive [this Christian/these Christians] into the covenant fellowship of Dandridge Community Church together with you, renewing your membership vows as you do?

Signify by saying: “Amen!”

Those family members under his covenantal headship (wife and children living at home) are also members, with the following exception: Any of those older family members under his covenantal headship (wife or older children living at home) who, in the determination of the Session, lacks a credible profession of faith (in either belief or life) in the Lord Jesus Christ, or who expresses a well-reasoned and sincere desire not to become a member of DCC, will not be accepted into membership.