

# CENTRAL VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH

## Constitution

Central Valley Community Church exists for the sole purpose of joyfully spreading a passion for the Glory of God in all things.

### ARTICLE I: STATEMENT OF FAITH

As a body of believers we affirm the following truths to be central to the Christian faith as laid down in scripture.

#### **The Bible**

We believe the 66 books of the Bible, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament are God's Infallible Word, without error in the original manuscripts, communicated by the Holy Spirit and faithfully recorded by chosen men. It is the only sufficient and supreme authority in all matters of Christian faith, teaching and living; given to the world that God may be known and glorified.

*II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-20; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 2:10-12; Hebrews 1:1-2*

#### **God**

We believe that there is one living, holy and true God who works all things according to the counsel of his own unchangeable and righteous will for his own glory; eternally existing in three distinct but not separate persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, justice, and redemption.

*Deuteronomy 6:4; I Corinthians 8:4-6; Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 48:12; Exodus 3:14; I Timothy 1:17; Malachi 3:6; Isaiah 6:3; Isaiah 46:10; Proverbs 16:4; Romans 11:36; Exodus 34:6-7; Ephesians 1:4-12*

#### **The Father**

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that he actively concerns himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that he hears and answers prayer, and that he saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

*Luke 10:21-22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5-6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6*

#### **The Son**

We believe Jesus Christ possesses two distinct natures yet is one person, fully God and fully man. We believe Jesus is God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, everlasting intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.

*Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30-31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9-10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; I Timothy 3:16*

## **The Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

*John 14:16-17,26; 15:26-27; John 16:8-14; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26*

## **Man**

We believe that God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God made male and female to be equal in value and distinct in role. The man is to be the head of his own wife just as Christ is the head of the church. He is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. This involves sacrificial love. It involves a commitment to nourish and cherish her. The woman is to respect and submit to her own husband just as the church does to her head Christ. Together from the beginning mankind was to be fruitful and fill the earth with image bearers of God and exercise dominion over the earth as representatives of God in order that we might worship Him, as well as proclaim and enjoy His glory forever. We believe therefore, that man's deepest fulfillment and joy is found in communion with God.

In Adam's sin, all mankind fell from this communion, leading to spiritual and physical death, and is now born sinful by nature, and by choice seeks fulfillment and joy outside of communion with God. We believe Jesus Christ, as the perfect mediator between God and mankind, redeems and forgives all those who repent and put their trust in Him alone, that we may now and forever proclaim and enjoy His glory in perfect communion with Him.

*Genesis. 1:26-28; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Eccl. 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:24-30; 7:10-13; 8:12; 10:26-27; Romans 9:22; II Thessalonians 1:9; Rev. 19:3-20; 20:10;14-15; 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Peter 3:1-7*

## **Salvation**

Salvation belongs to the LORD! It is by the grace of God alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. Salvation includes: Election, Calling, Regeneration, Repentance, Faith, Justification, Conversion, Adoption, Sanctification, Perseverance, and Glorification all by Union with Jesus Christ! It is the work of God whereby sinners are restored back to communion with God as it was in the beginning. All Sinners everywhere are commanded by God to repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ alone and His finished work for the forgiveness of their sins and to be made right with God. Although salvation is a work of God, He not only acts on the sinner in a saving way but also works through the believer yielding fruit in accordance to salvation.

*Psalm 3:8, 62:1; Revelation 7:10; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5-8; Romans 1:17, 3:21-28, 4:1-14, 5:1-2; 8:1-2, 8:28-30; 9:11; 10:9-10; John 3:3-8, 3:16-18; Galatians 2:16; 3:1-9; 22-29; Philippians 2:12-13, 3:7-11; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 6:1-5)*

## **Church**

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and that all those who trust in Christ are members. We believe the local church is a visible expression of the universal church, consisting of baptized believers united to Jesus Christ, who have repented of their sin and continue to do so, who meet regularly for the teaching of God's Word, prayer, fellowship, and celebrating the two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper under the oversight of ordained elders who care for the flock of God entrusted to them. We believe that the church is called to be a faithful witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25; I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15,23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 4:2; Col. 1:9-10; Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:1-5; I Corinthians 11:23-26; 1 Peter 5:1-5; Hebrew 13:17; Acts 20:17-32.*

## **Last Things**

We believe in the personal, visible, and bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal enjoyment of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked.

Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 4:5; I Corinthians 15; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6,11-15

## **ARTICLE II: THE NAME**

The name of the church is Central Valley Community Church of Hartford, South Dakota.

## **ARTICLE III: AFFILIATION**

The government of Central Valley Community Church will be the sole responsibility of the believers that make it up. While we are an autonomous church body we also maintain cooperation with and support for the North American Baptist Conference and the South Dakota Association of North American Baptist Churches.

## **ARTICLES IV: AFFIRMATION OF MARRIAGE, FAMILY, & SANCTITY OF LIFE**

We believe...

That God's intention for marriage is established through the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

This is expressed in creation, the creation story, the Law of Moses, the wisdom literature, and in the prophetic tradition. The divine establishment of marriage is confirmed by the words of Jesus and the New Testament authors. They provide guidance for perfecting marriage and affirm its spiritual significance. Chaste singleness and marriage are both honored as faithful and holy lifestyles ordained by God.

That God ordained marriage as a voluntary union for life, of one man and one woman. Our creation as man and woman, as assigned by God in the created order, is complementary to one another and has significance in revealing aspects of the image of God, and His relationship to humanity. The permanence of the marital bond mirrors God's faithfulness, just as its monogamy reflects God's singular devotion to his people and his people's singular devotion to him.

That sexual intimacy is legitimate only within the bounds of marriage. The commands of God are clear. Sexual activity profoundly affects people emotionally and spiritually. Sexual intercourse outside of marriage, promiscuity, common law relationships, adultery, homosexual acts, exploitation, incest and sexual perversion contradict God's purpose for human sexuality.

That marriage is more than a contract between two persons: It is a covenant before God. God is committed to every marriage between a man and a woman. In the covenant of marriage, God joins a man and a woman together "in one flesh," and forbids anyone to break it. This covenant is unique, among human relationships, to marriage. God intends the married couple to recognize and celebrate His call to an irrevocable commitment to love, to cherish and to remain faithful which transcends the quid pro quo of contracts.

That in Christian marriage, the Church acts as an agent of God's blessing, as a primary witness and as a supportive community. The church declares the blessing of God but does not create that benefit. Therefore the church cannot confer the spiritual blessing of marriage on other relationships.

That a healthy marriage is the best foundation for families and the raising of children. The practical benefits of marriage are inherent to its form. A healthy marriage is a unique source of benefits for children including the stability of the family and the access of the children to a mother and a father. God intended that children should receive nurture from a male and a female parent, and in turn learn to honor both. Neither the church nor anyone else can confer the innate benefits of marriage on other forms of relationships or unions.

That children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. God is intimately involved in the creating and forming of each individual human from the moment of conception in the womb. Psalm 139 speaks of each person being the handiwork of God and being "fearfully and wonderfully made" by God. Each person is made in the image of God and the sanctity and value of each person is derived from that basis. In addition, Psalm 127 states that all children are a blessing and heritage from God no matter the health, abilities, or limitation of the child. Each child should be valued, respected, and protected because of these truths. Therefore, no person should engage in behavior that should threaten, harm, or kill one of these lives made in the image of God.

## **ARTICLE V: COVENANT MEMBERSHIP**

Any person who has repented of their sins, trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of their life has already been united to Jesus Christ and added to His body. Therefore, anyone person who has been joined to Jesus Christ and His body ought also willingly submit themselves to a local expression of that body. Should anyone who has been joined to Jesus Christ and been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, upon profession of faith, in obedience before

God, and chooses to submit themselves to the Membership Covenant of the Church ought to be welcomed by all the assembly and become a member of CVCC (Central Valley Community Church) upon their request and the affirmation of the elders. Elders are to be involved in helping each member find a place to serve, provide care and accountability so that each member is being served and serving in submission to Christ and His body. Non-members may serve in the ministries of the church upon the approval of the elders.

If the applicant(s) is currently a member of another church the elders will send a letter of transfer to the previous church notifying them of a change in membership. Should the applicant(s) be under the corrective discipline of their former church, the elders are called to do everything within the ability that God grants to bring reconciliation between the applicant, their church, and our church in order that there may be unity among the brethren and no saints among us entangled in sin.

Church discipline is the exercise of authority given to the church by Christ to instruct, guide and promote its purity and welfare among members according to the word of God. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, removal from church office, and excommunication.

Discipline would be prompted by the following:

- A. Gross immorality or unrepentant sin (1Corinthians 5:1, 4-5; Matthew 18:7-20; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-17; 3 John 9-11)
- B. Heresy (Galatians 1:8-9, 2 Peter 2:1-3)
- C. Inactivity (1 Peter 4:10; Hebrews 10:25; 1 John 2:19)
- D. Any serious patterns of sin and lack of fruit that would cause the assembly to lack confidence in one's profession of faith (2 Corinthians 13:5; 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15; Titus 3:10-11; 2 Peter 1:3-11; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:8; 1 John 1:7-10; 2:15; 3:9 & 17; 4:7; 5:1-2; 5:4; 5:18)

The responsibility of informal church discipline rests with church members encouraging and admonishing one another regarding sin, speaking the truth in love as fits the occasion. (Matt 18:15-20; Gal 6:1)

The responsibility for administering formal church discipline rests with the elders; the responsibility to exclude a member rests with the congregation (Matt 18:17; 1 Cor 4:4-5; 2 Cor 2:6).

If individuals in the church body have concerns of inappropriate leadership in the elder team such as a sin issue or unresolved conflict, those individuals and two or three witnesses should bring those charges to the Elders. If the individuals do not feel like the charges have been addressed, they can contact the regional minister to help mediate the concerns. The regional minister would then take the opportunity to discuss these concerns with the Elders and those bringing the concerns to move toward resolution. A church meeting can be called by the regional minister if needed.

Following a biblical process led by the elders, a vote at any congregational meeting is required to exclude a member. Upon exclusion, the individual shall be treated with love as an unbeliever. All effort shall be made to restore an excluded member. (Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; Titus 3:10-11)

## **ARTICLE VI: THE PASTOR**

The pastor is an elder who is ordained in the Baptist church or one who is eligible for ordination in the Baptist denomination (1 Timothy 5:17-18). He should agree to the Statement of Faith and Membership Covenant of Central Valley Community Church. The Pastor must meet and maintain the character and gifting qualifications as defined by 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-4. The church must recognize him as particularly called and gifted for preaching and teaching. As elders, all staff pastors must be male (1 Tim 2:12-13, 3:2; Titus 1:6).

When pastoral staff positions are vacant, the elders shall be responsible for filling those positions. The Elders shall invite a representative portion of the congregation to assist in this process. These individuals shall be presented to and voted on by the congregation. There shall be a minimum of 5 members on such a committee and a maximum of 7.

Following the pastoral search process a candidate will be presented publicly to the congregation.

1. The elders will give the congregation at least two weeks notice prior to the candidating weekend.
2. During this visit, the candidate will be invited to preach during at least one Sunday worship service and meet with the congregation for a question and answer session.
3. After the candidating weekend, the congregation would have at least two weeks prior to voting. During this time, the elders will encourage the church toward prayer, and solicit any questions or concerns from the body.

Upon a vote in favor of the candidate at any scheduled member meeting, he shall be offered the position.

## **ARTICLE VII: ELDERS**

The Elder Board is the main governing board of the church and is accountable to the church body and ultimately unto the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ the Head of the Church (Hebrews 13:17; Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23). The job of the Elders is to serve the mission and vision of the church by providing spiritual oversight, support, and direction in all matters of doctrine and ministry at CVCC.

Elder Candidates are men chosen by the elders that fit the criteria of an overseer in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, and is a member of Central Valley Community Church, and agrees with our doctrine, mission, and vision. No candidates for eldership should be approved before at least one month of discussion and prayer by the elder board, one month of discussion and prayer between the elders and the candidate, and finally one month of prayer and discussion with the whole church. At the end of the three months, seeing nothing that would disqualify him, upon a vote at any scheduled member meeting, a candidate shall be recognized as an elder. So far as it is possible, the eldership shall be made up of a plurality (more than two) of qualified men. If situations arise that lead to there being less than three elders, the elders may nominate a provisional elder that could serve a six month term. As far as possible, the provisional elder should be a former elder of CVCC. The provisional elder would be presented to the congregation for a vote.

### **1Timothy 3:1-7**

<sup>1</sup> Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. <sup>2</sup> Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup> not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. <sup>5</sup> (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. <sup>7</sup> He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

### **Titus 1:6-9**

If anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. <sup>7</sup> For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, <sup>8</sup> but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. <sup>9</sup> He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

## **ARTICLE VIII: DEACONS**

The office of deacon shall be composed of as many men and women who are biblically qualified, willing, recognized by the congregation, and is fitting for the physical and practical needs of the congregation. The office of deacon is an office of service and does not carry teaching or governing authority.

Deacons must meet and maintain the character qualifications as defined by 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and walk in the example provided in Acts 6:1-7 (cf. Rom 12:7-8).

Deacons are to care for the physical needs of the congregation. They must have a heart of love and compassion for those in need. They must pursue and strengthen the unity of the body in Spirit-given wisdom. Deacons serve the church by freeing the elders for ministry of the word and prayer.

Deacons are formed to carry out the mission and vision of the church in a specific ministry area. Deacons are directly accountable to the Elder Board. Deacons should be members of Central Valley Community Church and be in full agreement with the Statement of Faith and Membership Covenant of the church.

The elders are responsible for interviewing, training, and recommending men and women of the church as qualified for the role of deacon. Deacon candidates will be presented to the congregation and the congregation will be given one month for prayer and discussion with the whole church. At the end of the month, seeing nothing that would disqualify them, upon a vote at any scheduled member meeting, a candidate shall be recognized as a deacon.

## **ARTICLE IX: BUSINESS MEETING**

There will be an annual business meeting each year held in December or January. There should be notification to the congregation, as well as, an agenda two weeks prior to any business

meeting. In case of an emergency, the Elders Board can call meetings as needed for items that need immediate attention

## **ARTICLE X: VOTING**

Anyone who is a member, as described in Article IV, can participate in the discussion and vote on church decisions. Members must be 18 years old to vote on any matter in the church. The church will vote on the following items with a minimum of two weeks prior notice to the congregation:

- A. Annual budget
- B. Purchase of land or buildings
- C. Calling permanent Pastoral Staff
- D. Changes in the church constitution
- E. The removal of Senior Pastor or Ordained Staff
- F. Creating a salaried staff position
- G. Calling and removal of elders
- H. Calling and removal of deacons
- I. Exclusion of a church member under church discipline

During the meeting the elders will present each motion to be voted on, give proper time for discussion and clarification and call for a vote. All votes are cast either verbally or by a show of hands, or by ballot.

A quorum will consist of 30% of the members of the church. There must be a quorum present in order to hold a business meeting. For items specifically designated in the voting section, a passing vote shall consist of 75% of the quorum. For items not designated in the voting section, a passing vote shall consist of 66% of the quorum.

## **ARTICLE XI: ASSETS**

Central Valley Community Church has soul ownership of all its assets. If at any time Central Valley Community Church disbands, the assets will be sold and all the money, after retiring any debt, will be used for Church Planting in the North American Baptist Conference.

## **ARTICLE XII: CHURCH YEAR**

The fiscal year of the church shall be the calendar year (January 1 – December 31).

## **ARTICLE XIII: CHURCH POLICY**

Policies and procedures beyond the scope of the Constitution are to be written and voted on by the elders. The elders may request assistance from the congregation to help write such policies/procedures, as seems good before the Lord. Once approved by the elders, the significant policies/procedures will be presented to the congregation during a meeting. During this meeting, by majority, the congregation can request a vote at a future meeting to approve or decline the policy/procedure.

## **ARTICLE XIV: DATE OF EFFECTIVENESS**

The constitution will take effect June 28th 2022. All previous written constitutions are hereby null and void.