

**ARTICLE I**

**NAME OF THE CHURCH**

The name of this church shall be TRINITY REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH.

**ARTICLE II**

**BASIS OF FAITH OF THE CHURCH**

Trinity Reformed Baptist Church recognizes the Bible alone as the ultimate rule of faith and doctrine. Trinity Reformed Baptist Church will use as a basis of faith the 1689 LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH and will use this confession in conjunction with the Bible in determining and resolving doctrinal matters. We acknowledge that this confession is not a replacement of the Bible but is a systemization of the doctrines found in the Scriptures.

**ARTICLE III**

**PURPOSE OF THIS CHURCH**

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. The purposes are:

1. To glorify God by loving Him and obeying His commands by the worship of Him;
2. To glorify God in the preaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by all Scriptural methods;
3. To edify and encourage all the members in their most holy faith and by equipping them through the preaching of the Word, Bible study, and other instruction for the personal proclamation of the Gospel;
4. To encourage Biblical fellowship among believers both in this church and between other churches of like faith and doctrine; and
5. To support those who are actively seeking to carry the Gospel to every creature whether the mission work is local, domestic, or international.

**ARTICLE IV**

**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH**

The TRINITY REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH shall be an autonomous assembly, i.e., self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **THE MEMBERSHIP OF THIS CHURCH**

To join Trinity Reformed Baptist Church means that the individual and the corporate body enter into a unique commitment to one another. Church membership is a mutual relationship with both the individual and the corporate body having specific responsibilities.

When someone joins Trinity Reformed Baptist Church, the church family commits to teach that person the Word of God (*II Tim. 3:15; 4:1-4; I Pet. 2:2; Eph. 5:26*); provide opportunities for growth, nurturing, and service (*Eph. 4:12-14; II Tim. 1:6; I Cor. 12:4-7*); provide a framework for building godly relationships (*Eph. 4:16; I Cor. 12:12-27; Rom. 12:3-21*); to carry out responsibilities of reproof, rebuking, exhorting, caring, and disciplining (*Eph. 4:14-16; II Tim. 3:16-17; I Thess. 5:14; Gal. 6:1-5; Matt. 18:15-17*); and to broaden the believer's concern and perspective on the non-Christian world (*Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 1:14-17; Phil. 1:27-28*).

The church member commits to developing in personal growth and sanctification (*Rom. 6:19; Eph. 4:15; I Pet 2:2*); to be faithful in attendance and participation (*Heb. 10:24-25*); to support the ministries of the church through giving and service (*I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:6-8; I Pet. 4:10*); to seek to preserve the unity of the church (*Eph. 4:3*); and to maintaining a good testimony toward unbelievers (*I Thess. 2:11-12; 4:11-12*).

#### **SECTION 1: The Eligibility of Membership**

1. The qualifications of membership are:
  - a. Profession of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - b. Evidence that this profession is genuinely seen in a scriptural experience of conversion, baptism by immersion following repentance and faith, willing submission to the teaching and government of the church, and consistent Christian living.
2. Applicants for membership must have been in regular attendance at the worship services of the church. No one may be received, with the exception of a new pastor, automatically by transfer from another church. No one may apply for baptism apart from consideration of church membership.

#### **SECTION 2: The Procedure For Membership**

1. The Elder Board will interview all applicants for membership. Before the interview, the applicant(s) will be asked to read and study the Basis of Faith and the Constitution and By-Laws of the church and discuss any points about which they may have questions or which may not be clear to them. The applicant(s) should be examined concerning their prior church membership, their profession of faith, their baptism(s), and any other matters the Elders may deem necessary to examine.
2. If any areas are found lacking such a question of whether or not the person was Scripturally baptized (this means baptism by immersion following one's profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and according to the concept of baptism as presented in the basis of Faith), the area(s) must be dealt with before the membership process can continue.



## **SECTION 2: The Procedure For Membership** *(continued)*

3. After the interview process is completed, the applicant must complete the New Member's class.
4. Following the interview and completion of the New Member's Class, the Elders will bring the application to the church for their consideration. Two weeks will be given for the members to share any concerns or reasons with the elders as to why the applicant should not be received.
5. At the end of this two week time frame, if there are no serious objections, the applicant will be asked to give an account of their faith and conversion to the church. Those requiring baptism for membership will be baptized as soon as possible. If there are serious objections to the application for membership, the elders will again interview the applicant discussing with them the objections that have been made and the elders and the applicant will determine whether to proceed with the application or not.
6. If the church lacks elders, then two church officers or two senior church members should fulfill the role of the elders in the membership process.
7. Applicants can apply for membership in one of the following ways:
  - a. By profession of faith in Christ for baptism as a believer.
  - b. By presenting oneself as a believer who needs to be Scripturally baptized (see #2 above).
  - c. By transfer of one's church letter from another Baptist church.
  - d. By statement that the individual has been saved, Scripturally baptized, and has been a member of another church of like-doctrine in regard to the essentials of faith.

## **SECTION 3: The Responsibilities and Privileges of Membership**

1. Members will normally be expected to be present regularly at services for public worship, especially the two Sunday services, the Lord's Table, prayer meetings, and business meetings. Attendance is not only a duty but a privilege given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The responsibility of praying together with other members of this church on a regular basis must be clearly established for membership to be a reality (*Acts 2:42, 4:24, 12:5,12, 13:3; Matt. 18:19-20*).
3. Each member should strive to seek his own spiritual advancement through the use of regular Bible reading and study, with both private and family prayer, and by having a proper reverence for the Lord's Day. A member may also request from the pastor the opportunity of one-on-one discipleship. There should never be one-on-one discipleship between a man and a woman; it should always be by a woman disciplining a woman or a man disciplining a man (*Deut. 6:4-9; Acts 17:11; II Tim. 2:15; Ex. 20:8-11; Heb. 10:24-25*).



### **SECTION 3: The Responsibilities and Privileges of Membership** *(continued)*

4. Members shall seek to obey the teachings of Scripture in respect to family life: the husband and father as the God-appointed head of the family ruling over the household in gentleness and love but with wisdom and firmness, and the wife in subjection to her husband in all things as his God-appointed helper. The husband with the wife must nurture their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord by setting a godly example before them by consistently teaching them in the Scriptures and by wise and firm chastening as Scripture affirms (*Gen. 2:18-25, 3:16; Eph. 5:22-33; Prov. 13:24; 22:6; Tit. 2:4-5*).
5. Regular proportionate giving to the Lord's work according to our means and out of a spirit of generosity is a mark of a true worshipper, and is pleasing to God. Tithing of one's substance is commended as a guideline to giving (*I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 8:1-15, 9:1-15; Heb. 13:6; Rom. 12:13; Mal. 3:8-11*).
6. Elders, being ordained by the Holy Spirit to rule and pastor the flock of Jesus Christ, are to be honored and members of the flock are to submit to their spiritual authority (*Acts 20:28; I Cor. 9:14; I Thess. 5:12-13; I Tim. 5:17-20; Heb. 13:17; I Pet. 5:1-4*).
7. Members are to work and pray zealously for the welfare and coming of the kingdom of God and seek by all possible means to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ (*Rom. 12:11; Phil. 1:27; I Cor. 9:19-23*).
8. Members should undertake all Christian service connected with the church in consultation with the elders and other members rather than acting independently (*Acts 13:1-3, 14:27; Rom. 12:3-10, 16; I Cor. 12:12-27*).
9. Members should seek to avoid all causes of division in the body and strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. All members are to discern their place in the body of Christ and honor one another above themselves (*Rom. 14:13; I Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:2-3; Phil. 2:1-4; Col. 3:12-14; Heb. 12:15*).
10. Members are to promote holiness, edification and love among themselves, by praying for one another, by spurring one another on towards love and good deeds, by admonishing one another, by showing hospitality, by bearing one another's burdens, and by forgiving one another. Members are to pray particularly for the elders and deacons in the discharge of their duties (*Rom. 12:10-13; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:32, 6:18-20; Col. 3:16; Heb. 10:24-25; I Pet. 1:22, 4:8*).
11. The behavior of believers in the community must accord with that wisdom and discretion which commends the gospel of Christ (*Rom. 13:1-7; I Cor. 6:1-6; Col. 4:5-6; I Thess. 4:11-12; I Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:5-8; I Pet. 2:12-17, 3:15-16*).
12. Members are obligated to read, understand, and accept the basis of faith and the Constitution and By-Laws of the TRINITY REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH.



## **SECTION 4: Church Discipline and Membership**

Matters of discipline arise out of the responsibilities of church membership. Its purpose is to uphold the glory and rule of the Lord Jesus Christ in His church, to maintain its purity here on earth, to sanctify each member, and to reclaim and restore those who err (*Heb. 12:5-12; Rev. 3:19; 1 Cor. 5:12; Gal. 6:1*).

### **The Administration of Discipline**

1. Any action of discipline is to be carried out in the spirit of Christian love and humility. It may involve great anguish of the heart and many tears (*11 Cor. 2:4*).
2. Matters of personal offence should be settled by members according to the procedure laid down by Christ in *Matthew 18:15-18*. Either side may request an elder to moderate the meetings.
3. Any member who willfully neglects the responsibilities of church membership, who falls into doctrinal error or into open sin will be subject to the discipline of the church. Disciplinary action may take four forms according to the seriousness of the case:
  - a. Admonition and rebuke, either private or public,
  - b. Suspension from the Lord's Supper,
  - c. Suspension from the privileges of church membership such as attendance at business meetings, leading meetings, or taking classes,
  - d. Exclusion from membership. If after a reasonable length of time there is no evidence of repentance, the elders will recommend to the church that the offender's name be removed from the membership roll (*1 Tim. 1:3*).
4. The church should pray for the repentance and reconciliation of those under discipline. When restoration is made, it may be appropriate for a testimony to be given to the church.
5. The church officers should encourage unity with other evangelical churches and the mutual recognition among churches of Biblical procedures with regard to discipline so that they are not made of none effect to the dishonor of Christ.
6. In some cases of discipline great discretion is required and therefore the elders are not obligated to give the church all the details of the case. At church meetings on these matters the elders will inform the church of their proposed action, and will invite members to approach them to gain further information or make their opinions known.

## **SECTION 5: The Termination of Membership**

1. Scripture recognizes disciplinary action or integration with another church, or death as grounds for the termination of church membership. There are other situations that may arise where a member should be allowed to resign. However, resignation should not be used as a way for sinning members to escape discipline.
2. The list of members should be checked at least once a year. Those who have moved from the area should be encouraged to integrate with a local church.



## **ARTICLE VI**

### **THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH**

The Officers of the Church shall consist of Pastor, Elders and Deacons.

**A. PASTOR.** The Pastor of this Church shall embrace and proclaim the Doctrines of Grace. He shall perform the various duties incumbent on his office. He shall be moderator of the Church, and shall be responsible for designating one of the elders or deacons as the moderator of each Business Meeting, thereby excluding himself from the position of moderator. The Pastor shall, however, have the power to speak as needed during the business meeting without special recognition from the moderator. He shall be ex-officio member of all boards and committees. He shall be paid a weekly salary contingent upon the ability of the Church to pay general living conditions and expenses involved in maintaining said position. He shall have a vacation time allotment that is agreed upon by the Elders, not to exceed four weeks. The pastor shall inform all officers of their duties immediately upon election to office. The pastor shall be permitted to accept invitations for evangelistic type meetings and to engage in fellowship work, provided he gains approval from the Elders and along with them makes adequate arrangements for someone to supply for him in his absence. The Pastoral relation may be closed by notice given by the Pastor, three months in advance, or, he shall have three months notice of termination by a two-thirds majority vote of eligible voting members at a called business meeting by the Elders of the Church providing public announcement has been made at least one week prior to date of vote.

**B. ELDERS.** The Elders of the Church shall share the spiritual and business responsibilities with the Pastor, and in such capacity, may be authorized by the Church to procure loans whenever necessary for the purchasing of property, and financing of the erection of buildings, to make, execute, and deliver notes of the corporation evidencing such indebtedness, and to secure the payment thereof by executing on behalf of the corporation mortgages or deeds of trust on any property, real or personal, owned by the TRINITY REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH, or pledge the same as collateral security for any such loans, and to execute on behalf of the corporation extension agreements with reference thereto or renewals thereof. Elders shall be elected for a period of three years after which they are eligible for re-election for a period of three years after accepting nomination and voted by the Church at the appointed business meeting. The Elders shall help the Pastor in the administration of the Lord's Supper, visitation of the sick, and to perform all scriptural duties related to their office.

**C. CHURCH SECRETARY.** An Elder shall serve as Church Secretary and shall keep a careful record of the business and membership of the Church, together with items of Church interest. He shall It is the Secretary's responsibility to attend to all Church correspondence and sign all letters of dismissal of members after insuring that such members have been visited by Pastor or Elders.



**ARTICLE VI**  
**THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH** *(continued)*

**D. CHURCH TREASURER.** Another Elder shall serve as Treasurer and shall receive all monies of the Church, except as otherwise provided for, and deposit same in the designated banking institutions. He with another shall be authorized to sign checks in order to validate a check. He shall keep an accurate account of all transactions and report to the Church monthly the up to date state of Church solvency. The financial records of the Church shall be properly audited annually by two Elders or members especially appointed each year.

**E. DEACONS.** Deacons will be nominated and voted into office at appointed business meetings for a period of one year, subject to re-election by individual consent. They shall be responsible for the care of the Church property and to carry out tasks allotted to them by the Elders and/or Church body. They shall not be a governing body, but shall support the Elders with their practical skills which will greatly help the testimony of the Church.

**F. GOVERNANCE.** Since the Church is small in number at this point in time, a combination of Elders/Deacons Board may be established until such time as the LORD furnishes growth in numbers and gifts.

**ARTICLE VII**  
**THE VARIOUS MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH**

**SECTION 1: Worship Services**

Regular diets of worship will be held on Sunday mornings and evenings and on week-nights as selected. The Pastor supported by the Elders will be responsible for these services.

**SECTION 2: The Ordinances**

The Lord's Supper will be celebrated at least once each calendar month, and at other times and occasions as deemed necessary by the Elders or Church Membership. If the Lord's Supper cannot, or will not, be held within a particular calendar month, the Pastor shall provide explanation from the pulpit, and declare the next date of the Lord's Supper at that time. In the absence of the Pastor, the Elders will be responsible for the continuance and continuity of these services.

**SECTION 3: Business Meetings**

There shall be two semi-annual business meetings held on a Wednesday night in May and November, no later than the third Wednesday of that respective month. If a Business Meeting cannot be conducted according to the timelines, the Pastor shall provide from the Pulpit a

reason for the delay and state the day the meeting shall occur. Only members and those who have started the membership process can attend these meetings.

## **ARTICLE VII THE VARIOUS MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH**

### **SECTION 3: Business Meetings** *(continued)*

Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor or Elders. In this regard, a member desiring to bring a matter of business before The Church body must notify the Elders in writing of such business. The majority of Elders must be in substantial agreement on such matters before bringing such business before the Church body.

### **SECTION 4: Conferences**

Special Bible and Missions Conferences may be conducted during the year as arranged by the Pastor and Elders and approved by the Church.

## **ARTICLE VIII THE FINANCIAL POLICY OF THE CHURCH**

- A.** The financial policy of this Church shall be personal giving of tithes and offerings as an act of worship.
- B.** When there is a need to distribute funds for benevolence or other special purposes, and in case of special occasions where the distribution of funds or the use of funds is not authorized by the Church, e.g., benevolence, etc., the Pastor and Elders shall constitute an executive committee to decide upon the distribution of the funds. A quorum for such transactions shall be a two-thirds majority of the Pastor and Elders.

## **ARTICLE IX THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH**

Each member is to acknowledge the axiom that the majority rules. When the Church by a two-thirds majority vote decides on any given question, each member must consider such action as authoritative above his personal opinion and shall be acknowledged by each member.

## **ARTICLE X THE AMENDMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

The by-laws may be amended at any regular business meeting of the Church by a two-thirds vote of eligible members present. Such amendments will have been given prayerful and careful consideration, and will have been recommended to the Church by the Pastor and Elders.



## RECORD OF CHANGES

This Constitution and By-Laws have been amended by the membership of Trinity Reformed Baptist Church on the following dates:

**November 5, 2003:** Both changes were accepted by unanimous vote.

1. Accepted Article V concerning the Membership of Reformed Baptist Church.
2. Voted to remove the signatures from the original Constitution and replaces it with this section containing a Record of Changes.

**May 5, 2004:** These changes were accepted by unanimous vote.

1. Change the title from "Basis of Faith and By-Laws of Reformed Baptist Church" to "Constitution and By-Laws of Reformed Baptist Church, Memphis, TN."
2. Accepted the rewording of Article II: Basis of Faith Of The Church.
3. Accepted an expansion and rewriting of Article III: Purpose of The Church.
4. Accepted a reformatting of Article IV.

**November 7, 2012:** The following changes were accepted by unanimous vote:

1. ARTICLE VI, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH  
SECTION A. THE PASTOR

Removed line stating "**and preside at all Church business meetings.**" and replaced with "**and shall be responsible for designating one of the elders or deacons as the moderator of each Business Meeting, thereby excluding himself from the position of moderator. The Pastor shall, however, have the power to speak as needed during the business meeting without special recognition from the moderator.**"

2. ARTICLE VI, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH  
SECTION A. THE PASTOR

Removed the wording "**He shall have an annual two weeks vacation with pay subject to extension, agreeable to the Pastor and Board of Elders, should he desire to visit his homeland which may be a great distance away.**" Replaced with the wording "**He shall have a vacation time allotment that is agreed upon by the Elders, not to exceed four weeks.**"

3. ARTICLE VI, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH  
SECTION D. CHURCH TREASURER

Removed the phrase "**Another Elder shall serve as Treasurer**" and replaced with "**A qualified member of the church who has been a member for no less than three (3) years shall serve as Treasurer**".

**November 7, 2012 changes** *(continued)*

4. ARTICLE VII, VARIOUS MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH  
Section 2: The Ordinances

Removed the wording **“The Lord’s Supper will be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month and at other occasions as felt necessary by the Elders or Church Membership.”** and replaced with **“The Lord's Supper will be celebrated at least once each calendar month, and at other times and occasions as deemed necessary by the Elders or Church Membership. If the Lord's Supper cannot, or will not, be held within a particular calendar month, the Pastor shall provide explanation from the pulpit, and declare the next date of the Lord's Supper at that time.”**

5. ARTICLE VII, VARIOUS MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH  
Section 3: Business Meetings

Removed the wording **“the second Wednesday night of May and November of each year”** and replaced with **“on a Wednesday night in May and November, no later than the third Wednesday of that respective month. If a Business Meeting cannot be conducted according to the timelines, the Pastor shall provide from the Pulpit a reason for the delay and state the day the meeting shall occur.”**

6. ARTICLE II, BASIS OF FAITH OF THE CHURCH

Removed the wording **“PHILADELPHIA CONFESSION OF FAITH”** and replaced with **“1789 LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH”**.

**February 12, 2013:**

Document re-formatted and updated with new font and style layout (Mark Tucker).