

Constitution

Article 1 - The Name

The name of this church shall be "Faith Community Church" located in or near New Richmond, WI.

Article 2 - The Purpose

Faith Community Church of New Richmond exists to: Multiply progressive communities of faith, escorting unchurched people to the freedom, joy and purpose of life in Jesus Christ.

Article 3 - The Criteria for Membership

1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 2:41-42

FCC membership shall be open to anyone who has personally accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, who has received baptism by immersion as a believer, and who desires to be committed to FCC as a local body of believers. Membership will be required to hold any church office.

Those holding a conviction regarding mode or timing of baptism which varies from that stated above may be received as Associate Members and hold all the benefits of membership with three exceptions:

(1) Holding the Office of Elder. (2) Voting on amendments/revisions to the FCC Doctrinal Statement or Constitution. (3) Serving as delegates to GLBC and BGC conferences. Associate members will be received according to the same method described below.

Individuals 18 years of age and under who desire membership must receive the written consent of their parents or legal guardians.

Article 4 - Procedure for Admission to Membership

It is the desire of FCC to uphold biblical principles of commitment to Christ and His body, the church.

All individuals who have personally received Christ as Savior and Lord, who have received baptism by immersion as a believer and who desire to be committed to FCC as a local body of believers may become members of FCC through the following procedure:

Completion of 6 months of regular attendance and consistent participation in the life and ministry of FCC.

Attendance at Membership Class. From time to time membership classes will be offered to provide teaching on the FCC statement of faith, membership expectations and principles of church government.

Personal Interviews. Following attendance at membership classes, individuals desiring membership shall meet with an elder or appointed leader to verbalize their personal testimony, to determine the integrity of their faith and desire to be committed to FCC as a local body of believers.

Signed Statement of Commitment. A signed Statement of Commitment shall be used as an instrument to affirm an individuals desire for membership and to serve as a formal record of membership.

There will be public affirmation of new members before the Congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service.

Renewal of Membership - Annually each member shall sign a Statement of Commitment to reaffirm his/her continued desire for membership. In the event that a Statement of Commitment remains unsigned for a period of three months membership will be considered terminated. The process for reinstatement shall be the same as the procedure for admission to membership.

Article 5 - Selection of Elders

The Elder Council will determine at least one period each year in which they will receive names of potential elder candidates. The name of any candidate who senses God's call, may be placed before the Elder Council by any member of the congregation.

Two representatives of the Elders will interview the candidate to provide an initial determination of desire, qualifications, calling, as well as a gift mix and personality that will strengthen and compliment the Elder Council.

If the candidate is approved for consideration, his name will be submitted to the entire Elder Council for consideration. Upon the unanimous agreement of the Elder Council, the candidate will be announced to the congregation as an elder intern and will begin an internship of not less than 6 months or more than one year. The intern will be assigned to serve alongside one of the elders who will coach, guide, evaluate and encourage him.

At the beginning of the internship, the name will be presented to the congregation at any regular worship service. The congregation should observe, encourage and evaluate the intern's suitability to serve in the office of elder throughout the internship.

If after the internship, the intern still believes God is calling Him to serve as an elder and upon a unanimous confirmation of the Elder Council, the intern's name will be announced to the congregation as a nominee to the office of elder. Any member of the congregation may present concerns of any nominees suitability to any member of the Elder Council for a period of thirty days following nomination.

If concerns are raised, issues will be evaluated by the elders in light of 1 Tim. 3:2-7 and Tit. 1:6-9. Following the thirty day nomination period, with all concerns resolved, the name of the nominee will be considered by the Elder Council.

Upon unanimous confirmation of the Elder Council, the nominee shall be received as a member of the Elder Council.

The newly called elder will be announced to the congregation and commissioned for service publicly by the Elder Council.

This process may be discontinued at any point by the candidate, or by unanimous agreement of the Elder Council.

Article 6 - Terms of Elders

Since the Bible indicates no fixed term for elders, no specific fixed term of office is recommended. Instead, each elder, upon appointment, will be asked for a one year commitment, subject to review, recommitment and re-affirmation by the Elder Council each subsequent year. Those elders who renew their annual commitment and are affirmed by the Elder Council will be announced to the congregation.

During the period of annual review, both the individual and the other elders shall evaluate his continued service as an elder, again considering the Biblical qualifications and personal factors that might affect his service. An individual's service as an elder may be discontinued by his own decision, or by unanimous recommendation of the Elder Council.

Upon unanimous agreement of the elders, an elder may be granted a one year sabbatical after three years of service. If more than one year is needed, or if an elder is unable to fulfill the requirements of office for three years, the elder will need to step away from office. The decision of an elder to leave the Elder Council would not preclude his service as a future elder, subject to the regular elder selection process.

If, at any time, it is confirmed by two or three witnesses (1 Tim 5:19-20) an elder is involved in sin which would disqualify him from office according to 1 Tim 3 or Tit. 1, he will be publicly rebuked and removed from office as soon as the Elder Council become satisfied the charges are true. It is the intention of the church that a sinning brother be restored in his relationship to the Lord and the church family. Any elder who is removed from office due to sin cannot be a candidate for any office for a

period of at least five years. It is most critical that a meaningful relationship with the Lord, a godly lifestyle and the confidence of the church family be restored.

Article 7 - Role of Elders

Elders are charged with the biblical responsibility of the oversight of the church. All policy, staff, budgeting and ministry plans are ultimately the responsibility of the Elder Council. The Elder Council may appoint individuals or special teams for limited periods of service to complete assigned tasks when the council determines delegation to be the most appropriate method.

The biblical qualifications for elder are all directed to men. FCC recognizes that God's order for the church is to have male leadership. This is not a matter of giftedness or ability but the sovereign design of God.

Article 8 - Selection of Deacon/Deaconess

The Elder Council will determine at least one period each year in which they will receive names of potential deacon candidates. The name of any candidate who senses God's call, may be placed before the Elder Council by any member of the congregation.

Two representatives of the Elder Council will interview the candidate to provide an initial determination of desire, qualifications, calling, as well as a gift mix and personality that will strengthen and compliment the Deacon team and function.

If the candidate is approved for consideration, his/her name will be submitted to the entire Elder Council for consideration. Upon the unanimous agreement of the Elder Council, the candidate will be announced to the congregation as a Deacon intern and will begin an internship of not less than 6 months or more than one year. The intern will be assigned to serve alongside one of the current Deacons who will coach, guide, evaluate and encourage him/her.

Throughout the internship, the congregation should observe, encourage and evaluate the intern's suitability to serve in the office of Deacon.

If after the internship, the intern still believes God is calling him/her into service, and upon a recommendation of the intern's coach and unanimous confirmation of the Elder Council, the intern's name will be announced to the congregation as a nominee to the office of deacon. Any member of the congregation may present concerns of any nominees suitability to a member of the Elder Council for a period of thirty days following nomination.

If concerns are raised, they will be evaluated by the elders in light of 1 Tim. 3:8-12.

Following the thirty day nomination period, with all concerns resolved, the name of the nominee will be considered by the Elder Council.

Upon unanimous confirmation of the Elder Council the nominee will be received as a Deacon.

The newly called Deacon will be announced to the congregation and commissioned for service by the Elder Council.

This process may be discontinued at any point by the candidate, or by unanimous agreement of the Elder Council.

Article 9 - Terms of Deacon/Deaconess

Since the Scripture indicates no fixed term for deacons, no specific fixed term of office is recommended. Instead, each deacon, upon appointment, shall be asked for a one year commitment, subject to review, recommitment and re-affirmation by the Elder Council each subsequent year. Those deacons renewing their commitment and affirmed by the Elders are to be announced to the congregation on a regular annual basis.

During the period of annual review, both the individual and the elders shall evaluate the deacons continued service as a deacon, again considering the Biblical qualifications as well as any personal factors that might affect service. An individual's service as a deacon may be discontinued by his/her own decision, or by unanimous recommendation of the Elder Council.

Upon unanimous agreement of the elders, a deacon may be granted a one year sabbatical after three years of service. If more than one year's time is needed or if a deacon is unable to fulfill the requirements of office for three years, the deacon will need to step away from office and return through the normal deacon selection process. The decision of a deacon to leave office would not preclude service as a future deacon, subject to the regular deacon selection process.

If, at any time, it is confirmed that a deacon is involved in sin which would disqualify from office according to 1 Tim 3:8-13, he/she will be publicly rebuked and removed from office as soon as the Elder Council is satisfied that the charges are true. It is the intention of the church that he/she be restored in relationship to the Lord and the church family. However, any deacon who is removed from office due to sin cannot be a candidate for any office for a period of at least five years. It is most critical that a meaningful relationship with the Lord, a godly lifestyle and the confidence of the church family be restored.

Article 10 - Role of Deacon/Deaconess

The deacon/deaconess may serve a wide variety of practical tasks within the church family under the direction of the Elder Council. The prototype of the deacon ministry is found in Acts 6:1-7.

Article 11 - Ministry Staff Members

In accordance with New Testament principles of leadership, paid ministry staff are not to be selected solely on the basis of performance or professional credentials. Rather, we acknowledge the following criteria for the selection of ministry staff members:

A love for the Lord and the display of a consistent godly walk.

A specific commitment to the FCC body and co-leaders.

Gifts, abilities and credentials that qualify this individual for the ministry responsibilities as well as a personal style that will strengthen and compliment the ministry staff of FCC.

Any ministry staff member not called as an elder, will be expected to meet deacon qualifications.

Ministry staff members serve as role models for other believers. Therefore, spiritual qualifications and lifestyle are of the utmost importance.

The elders shall be responsible for the oversight of ministry staff, including staff selection and dismissal, when necessary. Each ministry staff member will be accountable to one supervisor. The roles and job descriptions for staff members require approval of their immediate supervisor and the elders. Staff salaries shall be determined annually by the Elder Council.

Article 12 - The Role of the Senior Pastor

Consistent with the New Testament teaching regarding spiritual gifts, it is evident that the senior pastor, like any member of the body, is uniquely gifted and should seek to serve within his gift area. (Eph. 4:11ff; 1 Cor. 12)

In addition to his shepherding role as an elder, the senior pastor is primarily to be a teacher of the Word of God, the Bible. He is to teach and exhort by precept and by example. His goal is to help bring people to maturity of faith through insightful and accurate presentation and proclamation of the Bible, equipping them to be the true ministers of the body. As a teacher he must stress both the understanding and the application of God's Word.

The senior pastor should not be responsible to serve in areas unrelated to his primary function as a teaching elder and should maintain a proper balance of prayer, teaching, shepherding and leadership. (Rom. 12:6-7; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:15; 1 Thess. 2:4-5,10-12; Tit. 1:7; Eph. 4:11-12; Jas. 2:22)

As shepherds of the church, it is one of the roles of the elders to appoint other leaders with complementary gifts to undertake areas and aspects of the ministry that cannot and/or should not be filled by the senior pastor.

Teaching within the body should not be limited to the senior pastor. The New Testament emphasizes the need for teaching elders and the utilization of other members who are gifted to teach, providing a variety of teaching styles, input and role models.

Article 13 - Selection of the Senior Pastor

In the event of vacancy in the office of senior pastor, the elders shall be responsible to conduct a search for candidates to fill the position.

Once the elders have selected a candidate, evaluated and approved him according to the elder qualifications of 1 Tim. 3 and Tit. 1, he will be presented to the congregation as a nominee for the office of Senior Pastor. No candidate may be presented to the congregation who has not first been closely evaluated and approved by the Elder Council. A suitable process of exposure and evaluation by the congregation will be developed by the Elder Council. At the conclusion of the congregational evaluation, a 2/3 majority vote of the membership in attendance at a meeting called for that purpose, will be required for approval and appointment. Notice will be given to all members at least two weeks prior to a meeting to be held for the purpose of voting on a Senior Pastor. It should be understood that a congregational vote does not constitute a call from God but gives indication of a desire and willingness to follow the leadership of this man and affirms his role as an elder.

Article 14 - Property Acquisition and Disposition

The Elder Council is responsible to guide the process of property acquisition and disposition. Prior to making any legal agreement to purchase or sell real property, the elders are required to present the proposal to the members. A majority vote of the members present will be required for approval of acquisition or disposition. In the event God should lead Faith Community Church of New Richmond to disband the elder council will present the proposal to the members with a proposal to use any remaining assets to further the purpose of FCC in church planting. A majority vote of members present will be required to approve disbanding and donation of assets.

Article 15 - Procedure for Amendment

This document was drafted by faithful but fallible people. Should the Spirit of God point out the need to revise this document in any way, the Elder Council will present suggested revisions to the membership of this body for ratification by majority vote of the members present at a meeting called for that purpose.

Minor revision not effecting change in the theology, ministry philosophy or overall structure and government shall be made at the discretion of the elders (i.e. grammar, clarification of ideas considered confusing, added Scriptural support, etc.)

Article 16 - Statement of Cooperation

In order to accomplish what Jesus has given us to do, we network with other churches of similar doctrine and objectives through a denomination. Our local church is voluntarily a part of the Baptist General Conference and the Great Lakes Baptist Conference. If it ever becomes necessary we may withdraw from the conference at our discretion. The denomination exists and functions to help local churches make more and better followers of Jesus Christ. We also join with independent churches and churches of other denominations when we believe this relationship will help us do what God wants us to do. (Acts 15:36,41; 16:5; 1 Cor 16:1; Gal 1:1-3; Rev 1:4,10-11)

Adopted . . . 02/25/98