

Constitution for The Chapel at Tinkers Creek

Revised- December 2017



History

The Chapel at Tinkers Creek is a Chapel Consortium church founded September 12, 2004 by Riverwood Community Chapel with the support of Christ Community Chapel and the Chapel in Akron. By January of 2005, the church was self-supporting and meeting weekly in Aurora High School. In December of 2006 the church began meeting in Streetsboro Middle School. In the fall of 2009 the church purchased the Knights of Columbus Hall in Streetsboro, and began meeting there in January of 2010.

Section 1- Philosophy & Core Values

We believe in wholeheartedness (spiritual vitality) that expresses itself by loving God and loving others quietly and humbly. The intent of all teaching, ministries, and activities is to become better lovers of God and others within our homes, church family, neighborhoods, workplaces, the community of Streetsboro, and beyond. (Matthew 22:37-40).

Concerns Affecting Philosophy

1. We must be careful not to use church activities to avoid felt emptiness, which is necessary fuel for developing a deeper relationship with God and others.
2. In a similar way, church activities must not be merely a safer alternative to pursuing organic and more mature relationships in which we are loved and known, and accountable in how we love God and others.
3. Biblical knowledge or ministry involvement must not be confused for godliness (which is demonstrated in how we relate to God and others, beginning with those in our primary relationships).
4. Biblical knowledge or ministry involvement must not be used to distinguish ourselves from others, but only as a means to love God and others quietly and humbly.

Core Values: How We Implement Our Philosophy

Simplicity

We believe in a few well-chosen, planned, and promoted activities with time in between for rest, reflection, and pursuing organic relationship with God and others. Members are encouraged to focus on a few ministries as opposed to participating in all of them. The content of all teaching should be focused and reemphasized so it can be reflected upon, rested with, and applied to our relationships with God and others.

Authenticity

We believe authenticity (honesty about where we are) is the first step in learning to better love God and others. Teaching should be from a coping model (where the teacher is still learning) as opposed to a mastery model (where the teacher has arrived).

Specificity

We believe each member of the body is equipped to love God and serve the other members of the body with unique experiences, skills, gifts, and passions. We believe that men and women relate in unique ways that reveal different aspects of how God relates within the Trinity and with His Church. Specificity should be taught, embraced, celebrated, and directed toward loving God and loving others within our homes, church family, neighborhoods, workplaces, the community of Streetsboro, and beyond.

Continuity

We believe that Scripture is one continual story of a relational, triune God pursuing relationship with humankind. We are at the end of a long line of people throughout Scripture and church history whose task was to love God and others. We believe in practicing and promoting "a long obedience in the same direction". Teaching should reflect this continuity.

Section 2- Statement of Faith

The following statement is a summary of what we consider to be the essentials of the faith. Members will have differing views on more minor points of faith and these differences should be handled charitably and with respect for each other.

The Word of God

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God without error in the original writings, complete, and authoritative. (2 Peter 1:20-21, 2 Peter 3:1-2, 2 Timothy 3:16),

The Trinity

We believe in one God, Creator and Sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Equally divine, yet distinct in personhood, their eternal co-relating demonstrates the importance of relationships as central to spirituality. (Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19, 1 Peter 1:2, John 14:16-17, 2 Corinthians 13:14).

God the Father

We believe in God the Father, Maker of heaven and earth. In Him, we live and move and exist. He created all things and has reconciled all things to Himself through Jesus Christ (Genesis 1:1, 1 Corinthians 8:6, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Acts 17:28).

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son and that through him all things were created. He is fully God and fully man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. (John 8:58, Colossians 1:15, John 1:3, Hebrews 1:3, John 1:14, 1 Timothy 2:5, Matthew 1:24-25).

We believe in his sinless life (Hebrew 4:15), his substitutionary atonement (1 Peter 3:18), his bodily resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20, John 20:27), his ascension into heaven (Luke 24:51), his priestly intercession on behalf of his people (Hebrews 4:14-16), and his personal, visible, return from heaven prior to the last judgment (John 14:2-3, Matthew 24:30).

Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is the Helper sent by the Father at the request of the Son to be the Spirit of Truth (John 16:7).

We believe in the Spirit's work in conviction and conversion (Titus 3:5, John 16:8), making us holy (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2), and keeping us in the faith (Ephesians 1:13, 2 Corinthians 1:22, 2 Timothy 1:14). His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus (John 16:14), to guide us toward truth (John 16:13, Romans 8:14), to help us understand the love of God (Romans 5:5), to comfort us and help us pray (Romans 8:16 & 26), to distribute gifts to each believer (1 Corinthians 12:11), to initiate us into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), to preserve unity and love (Colossians 1:8, Philippians 2:1-2), to free us from perfectionism (2 Corinthians 3:17, Galatians 5:1, Philippians 3:3), to empower us for godly living (Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 3:16), and to raise our mortal bodies (Romans 8:11) The Holy Spirit also inspired the accurate recording of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 10:15-17, 1 Peter 1:11-12, 2 Peter 1:21). We do not believe the Holy Spirit comes and goes, but that His indwelling continues in every true believer (John 14:17, 1 Corinthians 3:16, James 4:5, 1 John 4:13, Romans 8:9). We can, however, grieve and quench the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Humanity

We believe God created humanity, male and female, in the image of God and free from sin. We believe all persons are sinners by nature and choice and are, therefore, spiritually dead and subject to physical decline and death. However, God has not given up on humanity and will one day restore us to life and immortality (Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-2, Romans 5:12, Romans 2:7, 2 Timothy 1:10).

Salvation

We believe in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This salvation is based upon the sovereign grace of God, was purchased by Christ on the cross, and is received through faith apart from any human merit, works, or ritual.

We believe salvation results in righteous living, good works, love for others, and concern for the helpless and oppressed (Romans 10:9-10, Acts 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:15, Romans 3:24, Ephesians 2:16, Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 John 4:8, James 2:14-19).

The Church

We believe that the church is the spiritual body of which Christ is the head and author, and is comprised of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. This body expresses itself in local assemblies whose members hold a credible confession of faith, and have associated themselves for worship, instruction, service, and evangelism, according to Jesus' Great Commission. (Ephesians 1:22, Hebrews 10:25, Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 4:11-13, Matthew 28:19-20). The ordinances of the local church are baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 8:38-39, Corinthians 11:23).

Maturity

We believe we need daily grace and forgiveness and that the path to maturity in Christ is a long, slow obedience that is measured in faithfulness over years rather than instant or miraculous change attained by particular spiritual techniques. While growth produces life change, deeper character, and obedience, not all change is outwardly visible or measurable. (2 Peter 1:5-9, Hebrews 5:12-14, Romans 2:28-29, Romans 7:21-25).

Last Things

We believe Jesus will return to this earth near the end of time as the culmination of His kingdom on earth. We believe that at the end of time, God will summon a bodily resurrection of the saved and lost to a final judgment. We believe in the eternal joy of the redeemed in regenerated bodies in heaven, as well as the eternal destruction of the lost in hell. The eternal state of new heavens and the new earth will be the final triumph of the kingdom of God, and the end of the rebellion initiated by Satan and his followers (2 Peter 3:8-13, Romans 2:5-8, Hebrews 6:2, Revelation 20:10-15).

Section 3- Leadership

The Chapel at Tinkers Creek is led by the pastoral staff, the elders, and the Governing Board. The roles and responsibilities of each group are outlined below.

Pastor

The pastor is responsible for the overall direction of the church, for the training and discipling of leaders, for setting the tone and approach of the public services, and for preaching the word of God faithfully and consistently. The pastor supervises all the paid and volunteer staff and reserves the right to dismiss either paid or volunteer staff with due and documented cause in conference with the elders.

In the event of his decision to leave his position, he should give the Governing Board written notice of at least 90 days. A Search Committee should be formed to begin the process of finding a new pastor. The Search Committee should represent the church demographically, and be made up of 3 Governing Board members, an elder, and 2 members-at-large. The Governing Board will supply the Search Committee with a clear range of salary and benefit options, as well as any essential qualifications for a potential candidate, so that the Search Committee has all the information they need to make contacts. Their role is to interview prospective candidates until they can recommend a candidate to the Governing Board and the congregation. If the Governing Board concurs, the candidate will be presented to the membership for approval on a written ballot. If the candidate receives at least 75% approval, the candidate is formally called as pastor.

The pastor can be removed from office if at least 5 of the 6 Governing Board members concur, along with a majority of the elders (see Section 5). The senior pastor should attend the meeting where his dismissal is under discussion. Such a meeting can be called if at least 4 of the 6 board members request it, however, all members of the board and all the elders should attend.

Elders

Elders are men who fit the qualifications of eldership in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and who have earned the respect of the congregation over time. Because of this, an elder's role is perpetual, not limited to a specific term. Elders provide counsel to the pastor in shaping the vision and ministries of the church, and to the board regarding fiscal management. In areas where a specific church position is needed on an issue not covered here, the elders will craft that position after careful consultation of Scripture. Other specific duties include conflict resolution, church discipline, public teaching, and administration of church ordinances.

If an elder is married, his wife also should be considered a vital resource for wisdom in church matters. What he brings the church should be a product of their joint discussion and shared ministry.

New elders are appointed by the pastor with the agreement of the existing elders. His service is ongoing unless he relocates, requires church discipline, or moves to inactive status. An inactive elder is one who, because of life circumstances, has requested to be relieved of active responsibilities.

Governing Board

The Governing Board is made up of 7 members: 6 from the membership, plus the senior pastor. The Governing Board is comprised of both men and women and should represent the church body demographically. Each year one of the members is requested by the senior pastor to serve as the secretary to take and distribute notes of each meeting. In the event the secretary is not at a given meeting, another member will fill that role. While the Governing Board is the fiscal decision-making body for the church, Board members also take the lead on special projects related to property, finance, and ministry areas in which they have special giftedness, interest or willingness.

After Governing Board members have been nominated by the church membership, the current Governing board reviews those nominations to recommend new board members.

Recommendations should take into consideration not only the number of times a person was nominated, but also character, experience, and a balance of gender, vocation, and geography to represent the whole church. Two members of the same immediate family cannot serve at the same time. Church employees are not eligible for nomination, although the senior pastor is a standing member.

Nominations are solicited for at least 2 weeks in October, and nominees for ratification are announced in the bulletin 2 weeks prior to ratification. Ratification should occur by the end of each calendar year in a short members' meeting after Sunday worship. Ratification is accomplished by a printed ballot with each nominee listed along with a "yes" and "no" option for each nominee. Nominees who are affirmed by at least 85% of the ballots are ratified. In the event a nominee is not ratified, a new nominee is presented for ratification on a new ballot the following week.

Board members serve for 3 years, with at least 2 of the 6 rotating off each year. Members can request to be relieved earlier if personal circumstances require it. In such a case, the Board will nominate a replacement member who is ratified in a special members meeting called for that purpose.

Board members who undergo church discipline will be relieved of responsibility when the discipline process begins, and their replacement nominated and ratified. Even if restoration is

accomplished and the member stays in membership of the larger church, the member will not return to leadership on the Governing Board for a minimum of 2 years.

When voting on an issue, each member gets one vote, with the majority deciding the issue. There should be at least 5 members present before a vote is taken. Charitable disagreement is encouraged until a decision is made. Once a decision is reached, all board members should support the decision both publicly and personally.

The senior pastor sets the agenda for Governing Board meetings, but any member of the Governing Board can request an item be added to the agenda. If the senior pastor is unable to lead the Governing Board for an extended period of time, the board members should elect their own acting chairperson to serve until the pastor can return, or in the case of a change in pastors, until the new pastor arrives.

Section 4- Policies

Membership

Any person aged 16 or over that completes the church membership class and signs the membership agreement is listed as a member. Members understand and affirm the doctrinal statement of the church, as well as its philosophy of ministry. Membership is required of all teachers, Elders, Governing Board members, youth leaders and leaders of various ministries. People seeking those roles, if not members, should take the next available membership course. Only members can nominate and ratify new Governing Board members, vote on the acquisition of land or buildings, and vote on the approval of the senior pastor (both requiring 85% approval). Members who stop attending for more than one year will be automatically dropped from the membership list unless special circumstances dictate otherwise. Members who are known to disregard biblical standards of behavior will undergo a process of church discipline summarized in Matthew 18 and geared toward restoration (Galatians 6). Members who do not respond to private confrontations with the elders, may ultimately be removed from membership.

Finances

The church is funded by the offerings of its members and regular attenders. All giving is logged by an outside bookkeeper so that gifts remain anonymous (Matthew 6:1-4). Giving is a commitment taken on voluntarily by members as an act of worship and should be offered generously without being regulated by any certain percentage (2 Corinthians 9:6-12).

The budget crafted and approved by the Governing Board is the primary tool for fiscal management. Expenditures should be:

- a) Covered by a budget line item
- b) No more than \$250 (unless approved by the Governing Board)

If a purchase is made with a church debit card, receipts should be saved and turned into the Treasurer with the budget line delineated for each expense. The Treasurer is either someone on the Governing Board, or appointed by the Governing Board, to handle the weekly disbursement of funds and monthly budgetary reporting. While this is an annually renewable appointment, it is healthy to pass the responsibility on every 2-3 years.

Accounts Receivable (incoming gifts) and Accounts Payable (outgoing funds) should be managed by two different people. The Governing board has access to view all payments. They can adjust the budget throughout the year to match rising or falling giving levels.

Property

Any decision involving the purchase of land and/or buildings for church use should be ratified by members in a special meeting after Sunday morning church. Should The Chapel at Tinkers Creek be dissolved as a legal entity, all assets should be transferred to Riverwood Community Chapel in Kent. The decision to dissolve requires Governing Board approval of at least 6 members and the consent of a majority of the elders.

Amendments

This Constitution can be amended with the approval of 6 members of the Governing Board and a majority of the elders. Current copies of this Constitution should be maintained at the church office and posted on the church website.