



Contents

Section 1: Statements of Belief	6
1 Mission, Vision & Core Values of the Church	6
1.1 Vision Statement:	6
1.2 Mission Statement:	6
1.3 Core Values:	6
2 Statement of Faith	7
2.1 We believe in one God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.	7
2.2 We believe in the Bible—God's Holy Word, Scripture.	7
2.3 We believe in the Gospel—the Good News of Salvation.	8
2.4 We believe in the Church of Jesus Christ	8
3 Additional Statements on Issues	9
3.1 Statement on Marriage, Gender & Sexuality	9
3.2 Statement on the Sanctity of Human Life	10
3.3 Statement on Marriage	10
3.4 Statement on Women as Deacons	11
Section 2: Church Governance	13
1 Organizational Structure	13
2 Church Background	15
3 Roles and Responsibilities	15
3.1 Elder Handbook	15
3.2 Deacon Handbook	15
3.3 Staff Handbook	15
3.4 Ministry Team Handbook	15
4 Elder Governance	16
4.1 Jesus is the Head of the Church	16
4.2 Background and Rationale	16
4.3 Policies	18



4.4	Five Primary Tasks	19
4.4.1	Prayer	19
4.4.2	Pastoring	19
4.4.3	Preaching	20
4.4.4	Protection.....	20
4.4.5	Policy	20
4.5	The Pastor and Elders	20
4.6	“Flat-and-Fluid”	21
4.7	Selection, Number, and Accountability	22
5	Multiplying Church Leaders	23
5.1	Leadership Model	23
5.2	Biblical Standards and Vetting Process for New Elders	24
5.2.1	Character & Qualities	24
5.2.2	Process	25
5.3	Biblical Standards and Vetting Process for New Deacons	27
5.3.1	Character & Qualities	27
5.3.2	Process	28
5.4	Biblical Standards and Vetting Process for Teachers and Small Group Leaders ..	29
6	Notification of Leadership Changes	30
6.1	Who Requires Notification	30
6.2	Method of Notification	31
6.3	Timing of Notification	31
6.4	Record of Action	31
6.5	Suggested Transition Process for Senior Minister	31
7	Document Storage	33
7.1	Purpose of Document Storage.....	33
7.2	Physical Document Storage System	34
7.3	Types of Documents Maintained in Physical Form	34
7.4	Confidentiality and Stewardship.....	34



7.5	Review and Oversight	34
8	Elder Meeting Recusal	35
Section 3: Membership Policies		37
1	Policies on Membership	37
Membership Agreement		37
What You Can Expect From Us		37
What We Expect From You.....		38
I will grow in the way I Honor Jesus		38
Grow in the way I Invest in People		38
Grow in the way I Make a Difference		40
Doctrinal Commitment:		41
Benefits of Membership		41
2	Policies on Membership Removal.....	43
2.1	Removal Process	43
2.2	Who May Be Removed	43
2.3	Follow Up	43
3	Discipline	44
Restoration is the Goal		44
Sequential Steps of Church Discipline		45
Charge and Authorization to Every Member		47
Section 4: Worship Services & Sacraments		48
1	Policies on Baptism	48
1.1	Mode of Baptism: Immersion	48
1.2	Who May Be Baptized	48
1.3	Who May Baptize.....	49
1.4	Where Baptism May Occur.....	49
1.5	When Baptism May Occur.....	49
1.6	Baptism and Membership	49
1.7	Baptismal Declaration	50



2	Policies for Weddings	51
2.1	Who may be married at the church?	51
2.2	Who may perform a marriage at the church?	52
2.3	What are the guidelines for behavior before marriage?	52
2.3.1	Biblical Integrity	52
2.3.2	Length of Time	52
2.3.3	Previous Marriages	52
2.3.4	Premarital Counseling	52
2.3.5	Advance Notification	53
2.4	How do we plan our wedding at TCC?	53
2.5	What other guidelines are in place?	54
3	Funerals	55
4	Ordination	55
	Section 5: Staff & Leadership	56
	Section 6: Church Finances	57
1	Counting Money	57
2	Benevolence	57
2.1	Assistance Levels	58
2.2	Basic Process	58
3	Missions Support	59
	Section 7: Facility Usage & Activities	60
1	Facility Use Guidelines	60
1.1	Who may use the church facilities?	60
1.2	What guidelines apply to using the church facilities?	60
2	Vehicle Use Guidelines	63
3	Injuries and Liability	63
	Section 8: Other Policies	64
1	Previous Policies	64
	Appendix A: Table of “Others”	65



Appendix B: Suggested Scriptures for Shepherding.....	67
Appendix C: Future Additions to Consider.....	70



Section 1: Statements of Belief

This section enumerating some of the spiritual beliefs of Tonganoxie Christian Church is not intended as a theological treatise. Select topics are presented here for the sake of further clarifying the reasons that we have our policies, and some of the ways those policies affect the community life of our church congregation. Beliefs, to a significant degree, determine practice.

1 Mission, Vision & Core Values of the Church

(Adoped by TCC circa 2015)

1.1 Vision Statement:

Tonganoxie Christian Church exists for HIM:
Honoring Jesus, Investing in People, Making a Difference

1.2 Mission Statement:

We accomplish our vision by DAILY:
embracing God's word,
elevating God through acts of worship,
encouraging others with God's love,
engaging in spiritual growth.

1.3 Core Values:

- The **Bible** is our final authority.
- We invest in the lives of individuals and families across **all generations**.
- We make every effort to be **united in the Spirit** and bonded together in **peace**.
- We bring honor to God by **striving for excellence** in all things.
- We are **faithful stewards** of time, talent, and treasure.



2 Statement of Faith

(Approved by Elders and Congregation on November 13, 2016)

2.1 We believe in one God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(John 14:9-20, 1 Peter 1:2, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 John 5:1-12)

- We believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of all things visible and invisible. (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 5:16, 45; 6:1-9, Acts 17:24-28, Hebrews 11:3, James 1:17)
- We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the eternal Word, the one and only Savior. (John 1:1, 14, 29; 3:16, Philippians 2:6-11, Colossians 1:15-19, 1 John 4:9)
 - o Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, completely sinless and both fully human and fully divine; Who lived a sinless life; Who suffered and was crucified as an atonement for sin; Who rose again bodily from the dead on the third day; Who ascended into Heaven; and Who will return in victory to rule forever. (Luke 1:26-35, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 4:15, Romans 5:15-17, Luke 22:47-24:53, John 20:24-29, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, Acts 1:1-9, Colossians 3:1, Revelation 1:7-8 11:15)
- We believe in the Holy Spirit. Who convicts of sin; Who indwells every Christian; Who helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us in prayer; and Who empowers us to a fruitful Christian life. (John 16:8, 1 Corinthians 3:16 6:19, 2 Timothy 1:14, Romans 8:26, Galatians 5:22-23)

2.2 We believe in the Bible—God's Holy Word, Scripture.

- We believe God inspired the original writings of the Scripture and those original writings were consequently without error. (Mark 12:36, John 14:26 16:12-15, Acts 1:16, 1 Corinthians 2:12-13, 2 Timothy 3:14-16, 2 Peter 1:20-21)
- We believe that the Bible is the final authority for all matters of faith, truth, morality, and Christian living. (Isaiah 40:8, Psalm 119:11 105, Matthew 5:18 24:35, Romans 15:4)
- We believe the Bible teaches that God is the Creator and Sustainer of human life and creation; that God creates each person in His image; and that life is therefore sacred, from conception to natural death. We believe that God creates each person as male or female; that these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the "image of God" in humankind; and that each person's biological gender at birth is an intrinsic, immutable aspect of his or her nature an identity that cannot be changed by man's will or desire. (Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 2:7,21-22, Psalm 139:13-18)



- *We believe the Bible teaches that God established marriage in the beginning as a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman; that He has reserved sexual intimacy as an expression of love and commitment between husband and wife; and that any intimate expression of sexuality outside of Biblical marriage is sin. (Genesis 2:23-25, Exodus 20:14,17, 22:19, Leviticus 18:1-23 20:11-21, Matthew 19:4-9, Romans 1:18-31, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, 1 Timothy 1:8-11, Jude 7)*

2.3 We believe in the Gospel—the Good News of Salvation.

- *That man, created by God, willfully sinned against God and is consequently lost and without hope apart from Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 53:6, Acts 4:12, Romans 3:23)*
- *That salvation—the forgiveness of sins—is only by grace through the blood of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 26:28, Romans 5:9, Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 John 1:7)*
- *That one receives salvation by putting faith in Christ, repenting of sin, confessing Christ, and being baptized by immersion as the Bible commands. (Romans 5:1-2 10:9, Ephesians 2:8-9, Acts 2:38 3:19, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 2:12, 1 Peter 3:21)*
- *That those who have received salvation through faith in Jesus Christ are sent into the world to proclaim the gospel and to love and serve the world just as Jesus Himself did. (2 Corinthians 5:11-21, Ephesians 2:10, Matthew 28:18-20, John 20:21)*

2.4 We believe in the Church of Jesus Christ

founded on the Day of Pentecost, consisting of all Christians everywhere, and organized into local assemblies, called churches. (Matthew 16:13-18, Acts 2:14-47)

- *We believe the Bible teaches that every Christian should be an active member of a local church. (Hebrews 10:24-25)*
- *We believe that the Elders of the church are the overseers of its affairs and the shepherds of its members; that they are the final interpretive authority of the Bible's meaning and application for the church; and that they are responsible for the oversight, instruction, edification, discipline, and restoration of church members. (1 Peter 5:1-4, Titus 1:9 2:1-15, Hebrews 13:17, Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1, 1 Corinthians 5:11-13)*
- *We believe the Bible instructs church members to:*
 - *Meet together regularly for fellowship, worship, teaching, and the Lord's Supper. (Acts 2:42, Hebrews 10:25, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)*
 - *Use our natural abilities and spiritual gifts to serve one another. (Romans 12, 1 Peter 4:10, Galatians 5:13, 1 Corinthians 12:7)*



- *Love one another, bear with one another, accept one another, and forgive one another. (John 13:34-35, John 15:17, John 4:7-11, Romans 13:8, Ephesians 4:2-32, Colossians 3:14, Romans 15:7)*
- *Seek unity, agreement, and peace with one another. (Romans 12:16-18, 1 Thessalonians 5:13, Philippians 2:2, 2 Corinthians 13:11)*
- *Encourage and build up one another. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)*
- *Bear one another's burdens and pray for one another. (Galatians 6:2, James 5:16)*
- *Spur one another to love and good deeds. (Hebrews 10:24)*
- *Submit to the authority of the elders of the church. (Hebrews 13:17)*
- *Support the church financially. (2 Corinthians 8:7, Malachi 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:17-18)*
- *Pursue personal holiness and obedience to God's Word. (2 Corinthians 7:1, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, 1 Peter 1:15)*
- *Strive together to fulfill the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:19-20)*

3 Additional Statements on Issues

3.1 Statement on Marriage, Gender & Sexuality

(Approved on November 13, 2016)

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)



We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Tonganoxie Christian Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Tonganoxie Christian Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Tonganoxie Christian Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Tonganoxie Christian Church.

3.2 Statement on the Sanctity of Human Life

(Approved on November 13, 2016)

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139.)

3.3 Statement on Marriage

(Approved on November 13, 2016)

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, Tonganoxie Christian Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man from birth and a biological woman from birth. Further, the ministers and staff of Tonganoxie Christian Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man (from birth) and one woman (from birth). Finally, the facilities and property of Tonganoxie Christian Church shall only host weddings, receptions, and any other events related to the wedding between one man (from birth) and one woman (from birth). Tonganoxie Christian Church can refuse to host any event at its facility or on its property that may compromise these statements.



3.4 Statement on Women as Deacons

(Presented by Elders circa 2024)

This position was stated in a 2024 document entitled:

“Discussion – Women Serving as Deacon – Bible Study.docx”

Scripture seems clear that the role of elder (shepherd/pastor) is reserved for men (see 1 Timothy 2-3), so nothing in this discussion changes that position of Tonganoxie Christian Church and its primary leadership. Scripture is less clear on whether the role of deacon (servant) is reserved for men alone.

While we are all (men and women) to be “servants” in the general sense, we must dig deeper to ask if there is a clear command or prohibition on all (men and women) serving as deacons.

As we explored the Bible for answers, what we found was...not much.

Scripture reveals very little about women in the role of deacon.¹ Two main pieces of evidence were involved in the discussion.

1. **1 Timothy 3:8-13** discusses the qualifications for individuals who serve in the role of deacon. As Paul writes about “deacons,” he addresses the men of a male-dominated society. But in 3:11, he also addresses another group: the *gunē*, which is a Greek word for females that could be generically translated as “women” or specifically translated as “wives.” Is Paul talking about women who serve in the role, or is he talking about the wives of men who serve in the role? Intelligent, Christian scholars can’t come to a consensus on which is intended in this passage, leaving us with ambiguity.
2. **Romans 16:1-2** clearly identifies a female, Phoebe, as a “deacon.” But what is unclear is whether Paul meant this as a church leadership title or as a general description of Phoebe’s servant heart.

The rest of the New Testament is applicable to this question only by way of speculation. We can clearly point to women being valuable members of the church, intelligent and gifted and full of the Holy Spirit. We can list example after example of women who honorably served in the church. However, we

¹ Scripture generally says little about deacons, regardless of gender. There is little to guide us in terms of selection process, terms, scope of activity, etc. Most of our instruction focuses on Christian character.



can't state with certainty whether or not they were selected by God to serve in the leadership role with the title of "deacon."

Both sides of the argument can be defended Scripturally. Neither side can be definitive.

In the absence of clear direction from Scripture, then, we are left with a matter of godly opinion. Our church has always tried to follow the Christian maxim: "In essentials unity, in opinions liberty, in all things love." If a belief isn't a clear essential, then TCC has liberty in how to proceed in the matter.

- *We have liberty to allow qualified Christian women to be given the title of "Deacon" at TCC.*
- *We also have liberty to maintain the status quo of "Deacon" being a title reserved for men.*

At the present time, the elders' inclination is to stick to the current approach where women are valued "servants" in the church but not given the title of "Deacon." ...



Section 2: Church Governance

1 Organizational Structure

Adopted by the Elders on August 20, 2026

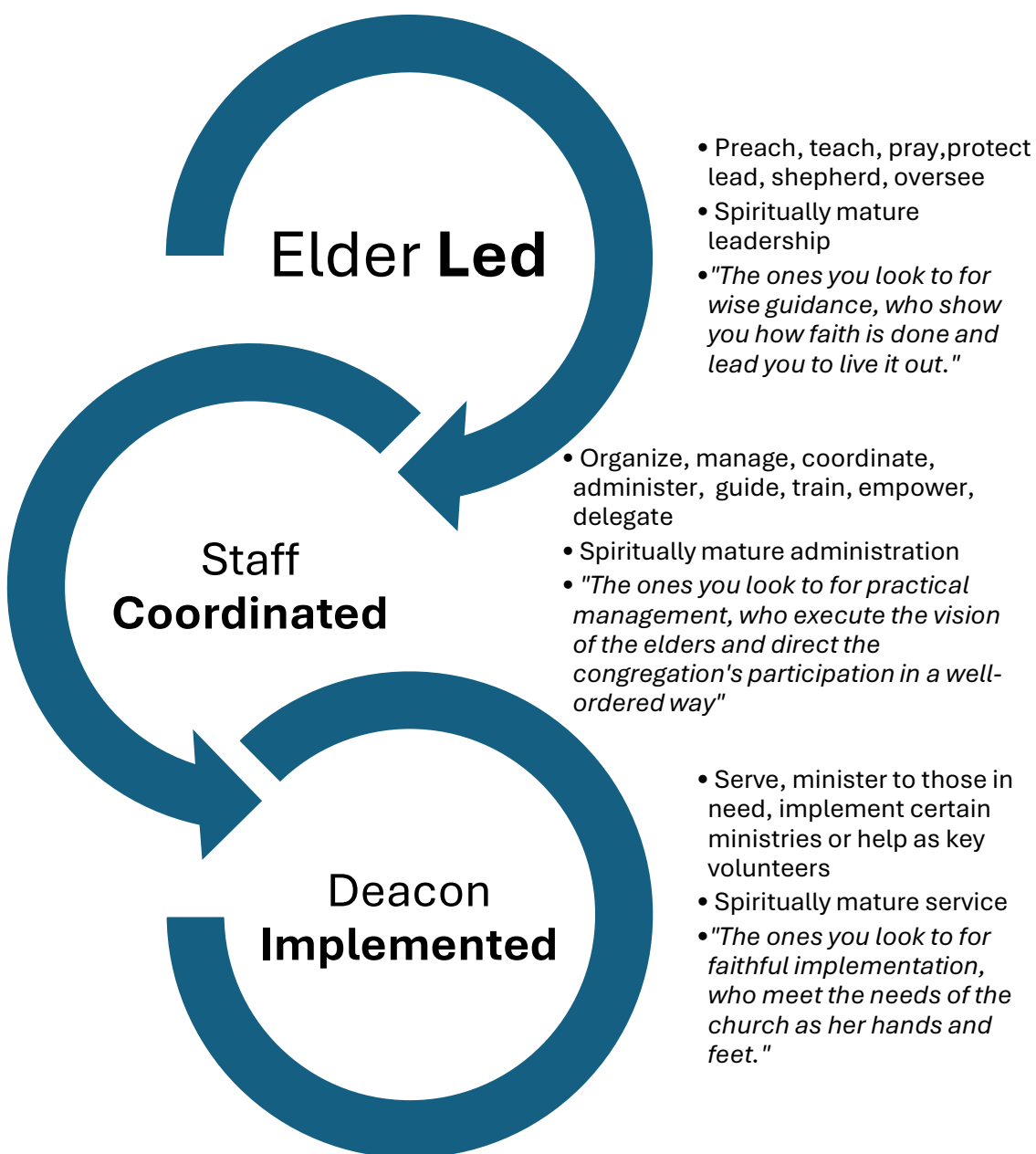
The church operates under the organizational structure **defined in our Bylaws** to support its mission, vision, and values. The structure outlines the various leadership roles, decision-making bodies, and ministry teams responsible for overseeing and implementing church activities.

Key points are summarized below:

- **ELDERS.** The Elders are responsible for **spiritual** oversight and **major decision-making**. They preach, teach, pray and protect the church.
 - **Senior Minister:** The Senior Minister is an Elder responsible for **leading by precept and example, communicating** the vision of the church, and **preaching and teaching** the Word of God.
 - **Leadership Team:** Consisting of an Elder plus other selected volunteers, responsible for overseeing the **legal, financial, business, and executive matters** of the Church.
- **DEACONS.** The Deacons are key servants in the church, responsible for **assisting** and **carrying out** the decisions of the Elders.
- **STAFF.** Pastoral staff (senior pastor, associate pastors, and ministry leaders) provide spiritual guidance, preach, teach, and care for the congregation. Support Staff (administrative and operational staff) assist in **executing** the daily tasks and maintaining church facilities.
 - **Ministry Teams:** Responsible for duties related to **specific ministry tasks**, such as worship, youth, children's ministry, and outreach.



A helpful diagram showing the relationship between leaders is included here:





2 Church Background

Adopted by the Elders on August 20, 2026

Our church is a part of what has been called the Restoration Movement, which began in this country in the early 1800s. We are a group of independent (locally autonomous) Christian Churches. Our goal is to promote unity in the Body of Jesus by "restoring" the Bible as our only rule of faith, doctrine, and practice. The membership of Tonganoxie Christian Church is committed to the "ministry of reconciliation" of individuals and the church body to God (2 Corinthians 5.18). It is our desire that each member will be "...thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3.16).

3 Roles and Responsibilities

Adopted by the Elders on August 20, 2026

The roles and responsibilities for positions are included in their respective handbooks. These handbooks will be reviewed periodically by the elders to keep them consistent with our current bylaws, policies, procedures and information.

A current copy of the following handbooks will be kept in a digital folder with the Policies and Procedures.

3.1 Elder Handbook

- Filename: "[CURRENT YEAR] TCC – Elder Handbook"

3.2 Deacon Handbook

- Filename: "[CURRENT YEAR] TCC – Deacon Handbook"

3.3 Staff Handbook

- Filename: "[CURRENT YEAR] TCC – Staff Handbook"

3.4 Ministry Team Handbook

- Filename: "[CURRENT YEAR] TCC – Ministry Team Handbook"

Additional handbooks describing the operational details of Ministry Teams may be maintained by each team. These handbooks should be updated to stay consistent with current Policies and Procedures. Each Ministry Team will make their handbooks available to the leadership and congregation upon request.



4 Elder Governance

Adopted by the Elders on July 16, 2026

4.1 Jesus is the Head of the Church

We believe that Jesus Christ is the one, eternal, supreme Head of the Church. By virtue of His incarnation, sinless life, atoning death, bodily resurrection, and ascension, He alone exercises divine authority, governs the Church spiritually, and sustains its life by the Holy Spirit. All ministry, gifts, order, discipline, and mission in the Church flow from His headship; no human office or structure supersedes or replaces His sovereign rule.

4.2 Background and Rationale

At Tonganoxie Christian Church, we seek to follow the forms and functions of the Church as found in the pages of the New Testament. The book of Acts provides the earliest window into the way the Church operated in the immediate aftermath of Jesus' life. Between Acts 11 and 21, there are approximately one dozen references to "elders" leading the earliest Christian churches. This mimicked the practice of the Jewish people, from whom Christianity sprang, both before and after Jesus' life on earth. In total, the Bible references "elders" as leaders of people – nations, families, and various sizes of organization in between – approximately 200 times (See chart). Therefore, we are led as a congregation at TCC by a plurality of Elders who mutually submit to each other as they follow the leading of God's Word through the prompting of His Spirit.



Translation	Total References	Old Testament / New Testament Number
New Living Translation	169	104 OT / 65 NT
New International Version	198	130 OT / 68 NT
New American Standard Bible	201	139 OT / 62 NT
English Standard Version	195	132 OT / 63 NT
Holman Christian Standard Bible	209	142 OT / 67 NT

“Elders” as Christian church leaders Acts 11 through 21 (NLT)

Acts 11.30	This they did, entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem.
14.23	Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in every church. With prayer and fasting, they turned the elders over to the care of the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.
15.2	Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question.
15.4	When they arrived in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the whole church, including the apostles and elders . They reported everything God had done through them.
15.6	So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue.
15.22	Then the apostles and elders together with the whole church in Jerusalem chose delegates, and they sent them to Antioch of Syria with Paul and Barnabas to report on this decision...
15.23	This is the letter they took with them: “This letter is from the apostles and elders , your brothers in Jerusalem. It is written to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings!...
16.4	Then they went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.
20.17	When we landed at Miletus, he sent a message to the elders of the church at Ephesus, asking them to come and meet him.
21.1	After saying farewell to the Ephesian elders , we sailed straight to the island of Cos....
21.18	The next day Paul went with us to meet with James, and all the elders of the Jerusalem church were present.

Further, in Acts 15:4,6 the Elders welcomed Paul and Barnabas as delegates to decide a very controversial and (until that point) undecided question – whether the new Christian faith would expand outside the Jewish people or not. The Elders, again, were involved in the resolution of this critical question as a letter was written and delegates sent (Acts 15:22).

Therefore, the Elders of the church were the primary group that discussed, decided, and acted regarding topics of the greatest importance to the early church. In keeping with this emphasis on the leadership of a plurality of Elders, our church chooses to practice the same. For the purposes of TCC and this document, examples in Acts regarding “apostles” are considered closely synonymous with “elders” (as Peter the Apostle reminded his readers in 1 Peter 5:1 that he was “a fellow elder”). In the first generation of church life and leadership, elders and apostles were present alongside each other through most of the book of Acts.

Not only do we at TCC follow the New Testament example of a plurality of Elders, but our Elders will, furthermore, devote their time and attention primarily to “the big questions” of



our church.² The ultimate leaders of the organization in this, our chosen paradigm, maintain a very broad view of the organization's *results* rather than delve into details of the specific *operations* of the organization's daily life. Our Elders endeavor to “speak with one voice,” work toward unanimity in decisions and outlook, and in a spirit of trust, delegate the operation (management) of our congregation to the church staff.

4.3 Policies

Our Elders are the ultimate leaders of our congregation under God's authority. We will not have Elders, boards, committees, staff or other groups setup in a polity of competing structures voting with, against, or “around” each other in so-called “balance of power.” Our structure is further clarified below.

For legal purposes in our state, the elders in conjunction with senior staff may appoint a Board to fulfill certain legal governance needs. In such case, the board will be appointed by the elders or their designees and this board's constituency will be affirmed by our elders on an annual basis.

Likewise, the elders of TCC will be affirmed and/or re-affirmed on an annual basis by our congregation during its annual meeting. An “affirmation” is considered as a two-thirds or greater “yes” decision by the congregational participants at the annual meeting. Elders, therefore, will fulfill de-facto one-year terms. However, if an individual meets all criteria in TCC's selection process and the individual is affirmed by the congregation, their term with the eldership will be open-ended and undefined. Sabbaticals may be granted and even encouraged as circumstances warrant. Elders are free to resign at any time, but are encouraged to converse with fellow elders in an exit interview before the resignation becomes effective.

It is the policy of TCC that elders will be of the male sex and gender. Qualifications for elders specify “husband of one wife” in both 1 Timothy 3.2 and Titus 1.6. Additionally, 1 Timothy 3 explicitly delineates the qualifications of the wives of church leaders; therefore, Paul was teaching that elders should be male adults, and that church leaders and the wives of those leaders have overlapping, though different, qualifications. Additionally, Paul also equated authority in the church to the Creation order of Adam and Eve in 1 Timothy chapter 2; that is, male/female gender roles in Paul's instruction were *not* bound by a patriarchal culture, but by a worldview of Divinely-ordered Creation. TCC, therefore, seeks to have male adults in preaching and eldership roles, as preachers' and elders' roles were highly synonymous in the lives of the Apostles Peter and Paul.

² This rationale echoes the approach of John Carver's “policy governance” in organizational leadership.



It is *not* our position that adult females have no leadership roles. TCC may employ females in both senior staff roles and in significant volunteer leadership roles. Females, in submission to the Elders' authority, may have teaching roles in the church, whether small group leadership or classes meeting on Sunday mornings or in leading and teaching the next generation. TCC simply reserves the roles of Preacher, Elder, and Deacon for male individuals as per 1 Timothy chapters 2 and 3.

Additionally, regarding sex/gender TCC will not allow transgender individuals, irrespective of their biological sex, for our Eldership, staff, or volunteer positions. The Bible consistently portrays God's expectations of human sexuality as one male – husband – with one female – wife – for a lifetime of sexual fidelity. As such, TCC endeavors to populate the leadership of our congregation with individuals seeking to live according to the example of Jesus and expectations of Scripture.

4.4 Five Primary Tasks

Elders will ensure the execution of five primary tasks related to the leadership of our congregation, all sourced from the primary chronicle of the early church, the Book of Acts:

4.4.1 Prayer

- This task/priority is based in Acts 6:4 when elders of the Christian church in Jerusalem delegated a ministry task (food relief) to other leaders so their time could be devoted “to prayer and The Word.”
- Our elders will devote significant portions of their time together at every elders' meeting to prayer regarding various topics and people that they deem appropriate.
- Elders will “set the tone” in the congregation to pray frequently with others in the congregation, especially “in the comings and goings” of daily life.

4.4.2 Pastoring

- This task/priority is based in Acts 20:8-29 and 1 Peter 5:1-3. In Acts 20, Paul told the Ephesian Elders to “feed and shepherd God's flock.” Peter, in his letter, addressed Elders as well and admonished them to “care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly ... lead them by your own good example.”
- Our Elders will “feed,” shepherd, care for, and lead the people of our congregation in spiritual matters through prayer with and over them, through relationships in small group venues, through maintaining accountability with key staff, through maintaining accountability with other small group leaders in whatever ways feasible, and through leading/teaching classes and small groups at, in, and/or on behalf of TCC as practicable.



4.4.3 Preaching

- This task/priority is based in Acts 6:4 when elders of the Christian church in Jerusalem delegated a ministry task (food relief) to other leaders so their time could be devoted “to prayer and The Word.”
- Our elders will ensure that Biblical teachings are proclaimed and presented, following the apostles’ teachings.
- Elders will be the primary teachers and preachers in our congregation.

4.4.4 Protection

- This task/priority is based in Acts 20:28-32 and the book of 3 John, especially verses 9-11. In the Acts passage, Paul warned the Elders of the Ephesian church to “guard yourselves and God’s people.” John, self-described as an elder in his letter’s opening, cautioned his reader against the influence of a power-hungry leader; he was protecting his friend Gaius from following the example of an evil man who had come into the leadership of a church congregation.
- Our Elders will exercise protection of the people of the congregation under their care spiritually through prayer and maintaining key relationships in various venues such as small groups and with key staff. Protection functions are further delineated in the Church Discipline Policy elsewhere in this manual.

4.4.5 Policy

- This task/priority is based in Acts 15:22-23, when Elders of the Christian church in Jerusalem discussed a divisive question of belief, determined an answer, and shared the decision by writing a circular letter to be shared with multiple congregations.
- Our Elders will contemplate, discuss, seek additional and outside counsel whenever helpful (whether legal, accounting, or otherwise), and after such deliberation will set and publish policies for the staff of the church to follow and execute. As a general rule, our Elders will not administer “daily details” of the church. The congregation’s annual budget is included in this. The Elders may set the budget themselves or delegate its setting to the staff, but in either case the staff will execute the budget on a daily basis.

4.5 The Pastor and Elders

It is the position of TCC that the senior minister *is* a part of the Eldership of our congregation. We take this primarily from the example of Peter. Across the book of Acts, Peter is portrayed as a prominent spokesperson – a preacher – in the early church,



specifically in Acts chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 15. Peter was undeniably a preacher in the early Christian Church. Additionally, in his letter 1 Peter, specifically chapter 5 verse 1, he refers to himself as an elder: *“And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder...”* With this in conjunction with Paul’s admonition of 1 Timothy 5.17 – *“Elders who do their work well should be respected and paid well, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching.”* – it is the intention of TCC that our preaching minister will be, in both title and practice, an Elder of our church. While contemporary practice precludes the paying of salaries by a church to its eldership generally as was evidently referenced by Paul, we intend to follow the New Testament’s example as closely as possible and look to our preacher as a fellow Elder.

4.6 “Flat-and-Fluid”

The church, Christ’s body, is under His rule

We are the body of Christ and each member is under Christ’s direction with equal ability to hear Christ directing the entire body. We affirm that every believer is united to Christ and, by the Spirit, is a living, indispensable member of His Body. As members we are interdependent: each has been given particular gifts, callings, and responsibilities to build up the whole, exercise love, serve sacrificially, and manifest Christ to the world. The Church’s identity, unity, and mission are realized only as its members submit to Christ’s headship and to one another in humility, using their gifts for the common good. The entire church body jointly senses and decides where God is clearly directing us to proceed in decisions.

Therefore we reject any ecclesiastical claim or practice that separates authority from Christ, elevates human leaders above accountability to Him, or reduces Christian ministry to institutional function without spiritual dependence on the Head. We commit to maintain Christ-centered leadership, mutual care among members, faithful proclamation of the gospel, and sacrificial service, that the Church—under Christ the Head—may grow to maturity in love and truth.

The Elders at TCC will not wield positional authority “above” the staff as typical in hierarchical organizational flow charts. Rather, we will strive to operate in a “flat-and-fluid” manner, deferring often and in myriad ways to each other, as in Paul’s admonition of Ephesians 5.21, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

In this paradigm, the preacher and chairman of the Elders “set the tone” for the entire church body. As they meet regularly and deepen their friendship and relationship, praying for one another, submitting to one another, building each other up in love, and following, to the best of their ability, the “one-anothers” and “each-others” (See Appendix A), their



leadership example will affect those around them. Fellow Elders and fellow staff are expected to be in formative Christian relationships following this pattern. Likewise, volunteer ministry leaders and people in the congregation should and will follow suit. Jesus stated that *“the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher,”* (Luke 6.40).

Therefore, in this model, responsibility for the health of the congregation “flows toward” and ultimately stems from the health of the Chair-Preacher relationship, requiring absolute candor and an impeccable commitment to *“leading a life worthy of [the] calling”* (Ephesians 4:1) between them. Conversely, this model entrusts significant authority to carry out *“the Kingdom of God already among you”* (Luke 17:21) as the broader staff, full Eldership, volunteer leaders, and whole congregation act as *“many parts of one body,”* (Romans 12:4-8), bringing the goodness of God into the wider world (Luke 4:18).

Elders and the Senior Minister will deliberately and reasonably give as much authority and autonomy to volunteer leaders and staff as possible to carry out the vision and mission of TCC within the confines of our core values, established policies, and current strategic plan. This reciprocal authority and responsibility, however, will not be construed to encumber the volunteers, volunteer leaders, staff, elders, preacher, or chairman with an unreasonable level of responsibility (for example, to personally make financial restitution on behalf of a congregant who made a poor financial decision).

In such a paradigm built on trust both in each other as fellow followers of Jesus, and trust in Jesus Himself to advance His church in every way, those in leadership trust those in the congregation to **“follow well,”** while those in the congregation trust those in leadership to **“lead well.”** Elders assume a greater and larger sense of responsibility for the health of the congregation, while always seeking ways to responsibly delegate greater authority and autonomy out into the staff, volunteers, and congregation.

4.7 Selection, Number, and Accountability

Regarding selection, there is no Biblical mandate for a minimum number of elders in a congregation, save for a plurality. TCC must have multiple elders. The elders currently serving will determine the appropriate number of elders to serve at the church based upon the number of spiritually qualified individuals. When it is deemed necessary to have additional elders, the process of selecting elders is shared elsewhere.³

Elders will meet as a group face-to-face as often as they deem necessary. Minutes will be recorded at each meeting. Elders will serve primarily in one of three areas according to their greatest gifting and calling: teaching, shepherding, and administration. The Elders will

³ See Section 2.5 “Multiplying Church Leaders”



appoint annually from their number the following roles: Chairman, Vice-Chair, Recording Secretary.

Our Elders will complete (on no less than an annual basis) a thorough and candid questionnaire for review by his fellow elders. These self-reviews will be discussed face-to-face as a full Eldership. As an annual tool, our Elders will exercise vigilance regarding the spiritual, emotional, relational, and mental health of the Elders through this highly candid and accountable mechanism.⁴

5 Multiplying Church Leaders

Approved by Elders on August 6, 2026

5.1 Leadership Model

Jesus' great commission calls us to pass on our faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior to the next generation. This is a foundational church pillar.

Every leader at TCC serves under the Lordship of Jesus, guided by his Holy Spirit and submitted to the authority of his Word. We are led by a plurality of elders, men ordained to teach Scripture, cast vision, and shepherd the congregation in the gospel. These elders ensure the spiritual care of all members of TCC.

Along with the Elders and Pastors, TCC also relies on its Deacons, teachers and small group Bible study leaders to be the frontline of service and shepherding care to the congregation.

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.
(Ephesians 4: 11 – 13 NLT)

The TCC Elders seek to multiply Biblical leaders. God has given each church a set of leaders who are called to make more leaders. This is part of making disciples, but the unique focus of this value is on the progression of leadership qualities in disciples, equipping leaders in the church to become the preachers, teachers, small group facilitators, evangelists, elders, deacons, and church planters of a future generation of churches.

⁴ The annual self-evaluation is found in TCC's Elder Handbook.



You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others. (2 Timothy 2: 2 NLT)

Prospective leaders must first be members who have a demonstrated record of using their spiritual gifts for making disciples, showing passion for Christ and compassion for people. The Lord has given you these passions, abilities, capacities, and responsibilities so that you will succeed in doing ministry for his glory, and so you can show others how they can use their gifts for God's glory too. You are to be both a servant and an informal leader, which is exactly the kind of leader Jesus is and calls us to be.

5.2 Biblical Standards and Vetting Process for New Elders

Per our Bylaws, (Article IV: "Elders") any adult male who is an active member of the Church, has demonstrated spiritual maturity over an indeterminate period of time and meets scriptural requirements (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17), is eligible to serve as an elder.

"This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be an elder, he desires an honorable position." So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? An elder must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap." (1 Timothy 3: 1 – 7 NLT)

"He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong." (Titus 1: 9 NLT)

5.2.1 Character & Qualities

The Biblical requirements for an elder candidate are twofold. The **first requirement** demands a demonstrated character that glorifies Jesus' character in every area of his life, both within the church and to the unsaved. The **second requirement** demands the elder candidate must have a demonstrated record of solid Biblical teaching, mastery of Biblical doctrinal truths and ability to correct doctrinal errors. This requirement is not character based, but rather skill based, being able to handle the Word of God rightly.



Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2: 15 NLT)

Elders are responsible for the church's spiritual health, Biblical literacy and to shepherd the congregation in the gospel. As such, Elders are expected to routinely attend and participate in or lead Bible studies each Sunday morning and each Wednesday evening to strengthen the members' Biblical literacy and correct any Scriptural doctrinal errors that might be taught or discussed. This is foundational to Elders protecting the flock.

If the elder candidate is married then he and his wife are Biblically one, so the wife must also be interviewed to confirm that she: (1) has a demonstrated character that glorifies Jesus' character in every area of her life, both within the church and to the unsaved, (2) fully supports her husband's role as a prospective elder, and (3) accepts the family impacts of duties expected of an elder to include, but not limited to, hours of shepherding, hosting guests in their home, and other duties as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

5.2.2 Process

1. **Mentoring.** Prior to consideration of candidates for elder, our current leaders should be investing in and discipling men within our congregation to help them grow closer to Jesus. It is only through this kind of development that we will produce men who possess the qualities we desire in future leaders.
 - Mentoring is replicating Jesus' character in others. So, to be a TCC mentor you must be a follower of Jesus, walking faithfully and in obedience to His commands.
 - Mentoring is to mature your own and one another's faith.
 - Mentoring is done one-on-one with another man.
 - Mentoring is how you demonstrate becoming like Jesus to one another. So, publicly practice the way of Jesus.
 - Mentoring is moving people onto God's agenda.

Practical steps in building a relationship with the man being mentored may include the following actions:

- **Co-lead a small group** Bible study
- **Co-lead** a Sunday or Wednesday night **class**
- Teach the "Learning to Follow Jesus" **discipleship book** to one another.
- **Share your life** and spiritual journey with their family



- Become **accountability** partners
 - **Pray** together routinely
 - Serve **shut-in communion** together
 - **Build up** the man being mentored so he can then go out to mentor less mature followers of Jesus
 - Both **volunteer** at TCC supporting weekly worship (greeters, communion/coffee prep, etc)
2. We will seek **nominations** from the congregation and current leaders. Names can be submitted by using a nomination form (see Appendix B) or verbally. Currently serving elders should indicate their intention to continue.
 3. Nominated individuals will be given a **prayerful assessment** by the Elders. Those who are eligible according to the bylaws and who do not have obvious red flags will be invited to consider the possibility of serving as an elder.
 4. Each candidate will be given a **set of vetting questions** and asked to provide answers (see Appendix B in the “Elder Handbook”). The submitted answers will be reviewed by the elders and used to determine whether to move the candidate to the next step.

Current elders up for election do not need to resubmit an updated vetting questionnaire but will be evaluated based on their most recent self-accountability form for peer review.
 5. Candidates still being considered will be evaluated for spiritual maturity. We will **interview** the candidate and **review references** (See Appendix B in the “Elder Handbook”).
 6. Elders will **discuss and select** by consensus men deemed qualified after the vetting process is complete. Those who are selected will be notified and given the opportunity to accept the role or decline it after prayerful consideration. As part of this process, current elders will offer an **orientation** discussing the role and all that is involved in serving as an elder.
 7. Those who are **selected** and who have **accepted** will be **presented** to the congregation for affirmation at the annual congregational meeting in October. Candidate names will be presented to the church membership for at least 2 weeks



prior to the meeting.

8. Those who are affirmed to serve as an elder for the first time at TCC will be **ordained** by the current and past elders in a ceremony during Sunday morning services.
9. Elders will be asked to continue learning and growing as part of our Leadership Development Plan

5.3 Biblical Standards and Vetting Process for New Deacons

The current TCC Elders are tasked with recruiting, orienting, equipping and integrating new deacons through a deliberate vetting process.

Any adult male who is an active member of the Church, has demonstrated spiritual maturity over an indeterminate period of time and meets scriptural requirements (see 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:1-7) is eligible to serve as a deacon.

“In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money. They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now revealed and must live with a clear conscience. Before they are appointed as deacons, let them be closely examined. If they pass the test, then let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives must be respected and must not slander others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do. A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 3: 8 – 13 NLT)

5.3.1 Character & Qualities

Demonstrating a servant’s heart and a sufficient history of lay service within the church are prerequisites for being considered for Deacon within the church. Deacon candidates must also have a demonstrated character that glorifies Jesus’ character in every area of his life, both within the church and to the unsaved

Deacons are responsible to the elders as individuals who are appointed as key servants in the church. They provide spiritually mature service by assisting the elders in accomplishing specific ministry tasks of the church. Deacons may serve, minister to those in need, lead ministry teams, or help as key volunteers in ministry areas.



Likewise, if the Deacon candidate is married then he and his wife are Biblically one, so the wife must also be interviewed to confirm she has a demonstrated character that glorifies Jesus' character in every area of her life, both within the church and to the unsaved, (2) fully supports her husband's role as a prospective deacon, and (3) accepts the family impacts of duties of an deacon as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

5.3.2 Process

1. **Mentoring.** Prior to consideration of candidates for deacon, our current leaders should be investing in and discipling men within our congregation to help them grow closer to Jesus. It is only through this kind of development that we will produce men who possess the qualities we desire in future leaders.

- Mentoring is replicating Jesus' character in others. So, to be a TCC mentor you must be a follower of Jesus, walking faithfully and in obedience to His commands.
- Mentoring is to mature your own and one another's faith.
- Mentoring is done one-on-one with another man.
- Mentoring is how you demonstrate becoming like Jesus to one another. So, publicly practice the way of Jesus.
- Mentoring is moving people onto God's agenda.

Practical steps in building a relationship with the man being mentored may include the following actions:

- **Co-lead a small group** Bible study
- **Co-lead** a Sunday or Wednesday night **class**
- Teach the "Learning to Follow Jesus" **discipleship book** to one another.
- **Share your life** and spiritual journey with their family
- Become **accountability** partners
- **Pray** together routinely
- Serve **shut-in communion** together
- **Build up** the man being mentored so he can then go out to mentor less mature followers of Jesus
- Both **volunteer** at TCC supporting weekly worship (greeters, communion/coffee prep, etc)

2. We will seek **nominations** from the congregation and current leaders. Names can be submitted by using a nomination form (see Appendix B) or verbally. Currently serving deacons should indicate their intention to continue.



3. Nominated individuals will be given a **prayerful assessment** by the Elders. Those who are eligible according to the bylaws and who do not have obvious red flags will be invited to consider the possibility of serving as a deacon.
4. Each candidate will be given a **set of questions** and asked to provide answers (see Appendix B in the “Deacon Handbook”). The submitted answers will be reviewed by the elders and used to determine whether to move the candidate to the next step.
5. Candidates still being considered will be evaluated for spiritual maturity. We will **interview** the candidate and **review references** (See Appendix B in the “Deacon Handbook”).
6. Elders will **discuss and select** by consensus men deemed qualified after the vetting process is complete. Those who are selected will be notified and given the opportunity to accept the role or decline it after prayerful consideration. As part of this process, current elders will offer an **orientation** discussing the role and all that is involved in serving as an deacon.
7. Those who are **selected** and who have **accepted** will be **presented** to the congregation for affirmation at the annual congregational meeting in October. Candidate names will be presented to the church membership for at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting.
8. Those who are affirmed to serve as a deacon for the first time at TCC will be **ordained** by the current and past elders in a ceremony during Sunday morning services.
9. Deacons will be asked to continue learning and growing as part of our Leadership Development Plan

5.4 Biblical Standards and Vetting Process for Teachers and Small Group Leaders

Bible teachers and small group Bible study leaders are foundational to our church’s spiritual growth. Given TCC’s congregational size it is not possible for our Elders, staff and Deacons to shepherd all the members. Hence, teachers and small group Bible study leaders also fulfill this critical role of shepherding.



Any active member of the Church, who has been given the spiritual gift of teaching, has demonstrated spiritual maturity over an indeterminate period of time and meets the scriptural requirements listed below is eligible to serve as a Bible teacher or small group Bible study leader.

Bible teachers and small group Bible study leaders must:

1. Receive the spiritual gift of teaching

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-12 NLT)

2. Prepare and teach diligently

“Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15 NLT)

3. Expect greater judgment if doctrinally in error

“Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.” (1 Timothy 4:16 NLT)

“Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly.” (James 3:1 NLT)

The leaders over the Christian Growth Ministry Team(s) – including Adult Ministry, Youth Ministry, Kid’s Ministry, etc – will develop their own process to vet and develop teachers and small group leaders to serve in their area(s).

6 Notification of Leadership Changes

Adopted by the Elders on July 16, 2026

6.1 Who Requires Notification

The congregation of TCC shall be notified of any resignation, removal, election, appointment, or other change in the following leadership roles:



- Senior Minister
- Other Ministry Staff
- Elder
- Deacon

Changes related to other positions and roles (ex: Secretary, Treasurer, Leadership Team member) may be shared with the congregation if and when such notification is deemed helpful or necessary.

6.2 Method of Notification

Notice may be given orally from the pulpit, in writing, by electronic communication, or by any combination of methods customarily used by the church for official congregational communication.

If shared at a worship service, an elder or minister should make the announcement.

6.3 Timing of Notification

Except in cases requiring immediate action, notice should normally be given no later than thirty (30) days before the effective date of the change, or on the first regular worship service following receipt of a resignation or official action by the church, whichever is sooner and reasonably practicable.

6.4 Record of Action

All leadership changes should be entered into the official records of the church. Elder and Deacons' lists are maintained within their most current handbooks. Staff lists are maintained within the staff handbook.

6.5 Suggested Transition Process for Senior Minister

Below are some ideas to consider when transitioning to a new leader. Other ideas may be appropriate to consider, too.

PLAN THE ANNOUNCEMENT. Announce the change well in advance of the effective date to allow time for adjustment. Use a mix of in-person, written and digital channels (bulletin, email, social media, website). Be respectful, hopeful, and reassuring, acknowledging the impact on the congregation.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE OUTGOING LEADER. If leaving on good terms, share a farewell message or letter thanking the departing pastor for their service, highlighting their contributions and the impact they've had. Consider a farewell service to honor their ministry and to give the congregation a chance to say goodbye.



INTRODUCE THE NEW LEADER. Offer a welcome message – a personal, heartfelt statement from church leadership welcoming the new pastor. Record a live or pre-recorded welcome video announcement, ideally with the outgoing pastor commissioning the new leader. Share family photos and a short introduction video to help the congregation connect personally. Provide a link to a sermon or teaching style sample to give a sense of the new pastor’s approach.

SHARE THE TRANSITION PROCESS. Provide an overview of the search process and how the new leader was chosen. If applicable, share updates on the search committee’s progress to build transparency.

OFFER SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT. Facilitate an open dialogue. Create opportunities for questions and feedback, such as Q&A sessions or small group discussions. Acknowledge the emotions of loss and uncertainty, and validate concerns. Ensure all communication channels deliver the same clear message to avoid confusion.

CELEBRATE THE TRANSITION. Highlight the vision and mission the new pastor brings, and how it aligns with the church’s values. Share testimonies of how the change is already making a positive impact.

USE TEMPLATES AND RESOURCES. Consider using pastoral transition announcement templates for letters, sermons, and welcome messages. These can help structure your message and ensure all key points are covered (Example below)



Pastoral Transition Announcement

Dear [Congregation Name],

We hope this message finds you well. It is with a mixture of sadness and anticipation that we announce the upcoming transition in our pastoral leadership.

After much prayer and consideration, [Pastor's Name] has accepted a call to [New Position or Church] and will be concluding their ministry with us on [Last Sunday in the Current Church]. We are incredibly grateful for the dedication and love that [Pastor's Name] has shared with our congregation over the past [duration].

During this time of transition, we encourage you to join us in celebrating [Pastor's Name]'s contributions, as well as in prayer for our church community as we seek God's guidance for our next steps.

We are excited to announce that our new pastor, [New Pastor's Name], will be joining us on [Start Date]. We believe this transition will bring new opportunities for growth and fellowship.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers during this period of change in our church family.

In Christ's love,

[Your Name]
[Your Position]
[Church Name]
[Contact Information]

7 Document Storage

Adopted by the Elders on August 6, 2026

7.1 Purpose of Document Storage

Tonganoxie Christian Church (TCC) will maintain an organized and secure system for storing important church documents. This system will include both digital and physical records to ensure proper stewardship, accountability, and continuity of church governance and ministry operations.



While many documents may be stored digitally, certain records will also be maintained in physical form in accordance with Article VII, Section 1 (General Scope).

7.2 Physical Document Storage System

TCC will maintain a centralized physical filing system for important church documents. These documents will be stored in a locked file cabinet located within the church building in a designated office or administrative area.

Access to the physical filing system will be available to church staff and church leaders, including elders, as needed to fulfill their responsibilities.

Documents should be clearly labeled and organized by category to ensure ease of retrieval and consistent recordkeeping over time.

7.3 Types of Documents Maintained in Physical Form

The following categories of documents may be maintained in physical form:

- Governance documents (e.g., bylaws, policies, and meeting minutes)
- Financial and legal records as deemed necessary
- Membership-related records when appropriate
- Elder and deacon-related documentation when appropriate
- Other documents identified by the elders as necessary

Digital storage systems (such as Dropbox or similar platforms) may continue to be used alongside physical files; however, physical copies may serve as official or backup records at the discretion of the elders.

7.4 Confidentiality and Stewardship

All physical records must be handled with discretion and care.

Church staff and leaders are responsible for maintaining confidentiality.

7.5 Review and Oversight

The elders will periodically review document storage practices.

Adjustments may be made as needed.



8 Elder Meeting Recusal

Purpose

Elders are expected to make decisions that serve the best interests of the church and to maintain the trust of the congregation. When an elder has a personal, financial, family, or other significant interest in a matter before the elders, that elder should recuse himself from discussion and decision-making when appropriate.

Recusal

An elder should disclose any potential conflict of interest to the other elders as soon as reasonably possible. The elders will determine whether recusal is appropriate based on the nature and significance of the conflict.

When recusal is required, the elder shall:

1. Leave the meeting or discussion during consideration of the matter, unless the remaining elders request limited factual information.
2. Not participate in deliberation or voting on the matter.
3. Not attempt to influence the other elders' decision outside the meeting.
4. Have the recusal noted in the meeting minutes.

Family and Personal Matters

An elder should ordinarily recuse himself when the matter directly involves his own employment, compensation, discipline, a close family member, or another situation in which his personal interests could reasonably be perceived as influencing his judgment.

Good-Faith Standard

Recusal is not an admission of wrongdoing or impropriety. It is a safeguard intended to protect the integrity of the elders' decisions and maintain the confidence of the congregation.

When there is uncertainty about whether recusal is appropriate, elders should err on the side of transparency and recusal.



Section 3: Membership Policies

1 Policies on Membership

Adopted by the Elders on July 16, 2026

The following Membership Agreement must be signed by those who wish to join Tonganoxie Christian Church as members:

Membership Agreement

God has called his people to live in community with one another to operate as the body of Christ. To the best of our ability, we desire to foster a God-honoring, loving, and grace-filled community of believers who live out our Vision, Mission and Values. To that end, we will make the following commitments to each other.

What You Can Expect From Us

As a member of Tonganoxie Christian Church, the elders, pastors, and other leaders of the church will strive to...

- **Pray for you.** We will work hard to care for your soul, lifting you up and caring for you and your family as we walk and serve Christ together.
- **Pastor you.** We will provide guidance and direction for you and lead our church as faithfully as we can as the Holy Spirit guides us.
- **Preach truth to you.** We will ensure that sound doctrine is proclaimed, taught, sung, counseled, and shared in all our ministries for the benefit of you and your family.
- **Protect you.** We will watch for unbiblical influences. We will spiritually protect our church, our families, and our members from errors in teaching. In addition, we will protect our church with sound policies and procedures to help the church succeed in its mission.
- **Listen to you.** We will take the time to hear from you. You will have the opportunity to share needs and prayer requests, as well as feedback and concerns. We will take your voice (along with others) into account through our congregational meetings.
- **Cultivate you.** We will provide ministry opportunities to develop your skills in alignment with your spiritual gifting. We want to equip you to serve the church well.



What We Expect From You

As a member of Tonganoxie Christian Church, to the best of my ability and with grace from the Lord and extended by my church family...

I will grow in the way I Honor Jesus

- **I will put Jesus first.** I will love, honor, and obey Jesus Christ above all else in my life in response to his life-giving grace.

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.” (Matthew 16:24–25, NLT)

- **I will worship consistently.** I will regularly participate in public worship services with the corporate body of believers at Tonganoxie Christian Church.

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24–25, NLT)

- **I will pray continually.** I will bring praise, thanksgiving, confession and requests to Him in prayer throughout each day.

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.” (Philippians 4:6, NLT)

- **I will receive correction humbly.** I will be accountable to my church, allowing TCC’s elders to speak into my life with loving correction and church discipline when it is necessary for my own spiritual growth and the benefit of my church family.

“My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.” (James 5:19–20, NLT)

Grow in the way I Invest in People

- **I will study diligently.** I will read and explore the Bible to apply its truth to my life and to equip me to share it with others.



“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.” (2 Timothy 3:16, NLT)

- **I will share life intentionally.** I will be engaged in the church community by being an active member of a small group overseen by the shepherding model of TCC, both for my spiritual growth and to contribute to the spiritual growth of others.

“And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—” (Acts 2:44–46, NLT)

- **I will contribute to unity.** I will speak and act in a way that brings a spirit of love, generosity, peace, and unity in the TCC community.

“Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.” (Ephesians 4:1–3, NLT)

- **I will seek restoration.** I will approach any problem I have with someone within the church with loving, corrective, restorative action.

“If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector. “I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven. “I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.” (Matthew 18:15–20, NLT)



Grow in the way I **Make a Difference**

- **I will serve faithfully.** I will use my talents and spiritual gifts in service at TCC.

“Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.” (Romans 12:3–8, NLT)
- **I will give joyfully.** I will give cheerfully from my income to support the Lord's work at TCC and beyond.

“Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.” (2 Corinthians 9:6–8, NLT)
- **I will share Jesus frequently.** I will teach and lead my family in the gospel. I will look for opportunities to talk about Him with others.

“Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”” (Matthew 28:18–20, NLT)
- **I will treat my work as worship.** I will treat my occupation as my unique call to worship and witness, doing my work with excellence and sharing Christ as the Lord gives me opportunity.



“Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.” (Colossians 3:23–24, NLT)

Doctrinal Commitment:

I understand that Tonganoxie Christian Church is an independent Christian Church with Core Beliefs and its own Statement of Faith. I embrace these beliefs and agree not to undermine them in any respect.

“... promote the kind of living that reflects wholesome teaching.”
(Titus 2:1, NLT)

My signature below indicates my intention and desire to uphold this Membership Agreement:

Signature _____ Printed Name _____ Date _____
Member

Signature _____ Printed Name _____ Date _____
Elder

Benefits of Membership

While our faith in Jesus is deeply personal, we are commanded to worship as a community, to live out or express our faith through service within our local church body and to proclaim Jesus’ saving grace to all who have not yet accepted Him as their Savior and Lord.

Those who are members of Tonganoxie Christian Church will have the opportunity to make their voice known through our congregational meetings.

As a member of Tonganoxie Christian Church you may serve the Lord in positions such as:

- Elder
- Deacon
- Ministerial Staff
- Bible Teacher
- Trustee
- Evangelistic events



- Nursery Worker
- Communion Meditation
- Security Team
- Shut-in Communion
- Finance Committee
- Christian Education Committee
- Missions Committee

As a non-member of Tonganoxie Christian Church you are still encouraged to serve the Lord but are limited to support positions such as:

- Greeter
- Communion and Coffee Preparation
- Communion Server
- “On-stage” Worship Team
- Tech Booth
- Kitchen Staff
- Decoration Team
- VBS Helper



2 Policies on Membership Removal

Adopted by the Elders on July 2, 2026

In an effort to maintain membership rolls that reflect actual member involvement in the church, the Elders will periodically review members' participation at TCC and remove as members those who have already removed themselves from church involvement without written notice.

2.1 Removal Process

Per the Bylaws (Article II, Section 4 "Termination of Membership"), membership of an individual may be ended by a consensus decision of the elders. Elders should make such a decision at one of their normal meetings and include the relevant information in the minutes of the meeting.

This item of business will be added to the Elders' meeting agenda at their discretion.

2.2 Who May Be Removed

Since membership should reflect active engagement with the local church, those who have not shown any participation in the activities or services of the church for a period of at least twenty-four (24) months, as reflected in the attendance records of the church, will be considered for removal.

Those who retain a close connection despite their absence (e.g. those with medical conditions that prohibit attendance, but who receive shut-in communion) should not be removed.

2.3 Follow Up

Those who are removed should be notified of the decision via letter (if possible), but with encouragement to stay connected to Jesus and the body of Christ, either by resuming a connection to TCC or by worshiping with another church.



3 Discipline

Adopted by the Elders on July 16, 2026

Jesus calls us to unity. In fact, Jesus' only unfulfilled prayer is a call for the unity of future believers.

"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me."
(John 17:20-23, NLT)

Unity is threatened when we fail to obey Scripture in so many ways. Per the Bylaws, (Article II, Section 5 "Discipline of Members") the leadership of Tonganoxie Christian Church will actively follow the corrective action outlined in Matthew 18:15-17.

Restoration is the Goal

TCC will always seek a member's repentance and restoration over removal from fellowship and expulsion from membership.

"Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself." (Galatians 6:1, NLT)

Examples of Behaviors Requiring Correction

Biblical examples of losing church membership include:

- Failure to follow Jesus' teachings (John 14:23)
- False teaching (Romans 16:17-18)
- Creating division (Titus 3:10)
- Blasphemy (1 Timothy 1:20)
- Unrepentant sin (Matthew 18:17)
- Immorality, idolatry, slanderous talk, being a drunkard or swindler (1 Corinthians 5:11)
- Moral failures of leaders (1 Timothy 5:19-20)
- Idle behavior (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15)
- Consistently failing to attend corporate worship (Hebrews 10:25)



A member of TCC who violates such Biblical commands or chooses prolonged months of separating themselves from TCC's public weekly worship services and communion, without Biblical justification, may be subject to the Elders' corrective action. This corrective action could ultimately prohibit a person from leadership "on stage," from teaching in classes or groups, from attending further public weekly worship services, or from being a member of the church until repentance is evident to the Elders.

If the Elders or leadership notice a member failing to live up to the standards of membership, the member should expect counseling, guidance, and Scriptural confrontation to ensure the member understands the seriousness of their actions and dangers involved.

Sequential Steps of Church Discipline

Jesus instructs us to resolve spiritual errors by progressive discussions leading to restoration.

We are instructed Biblically to first go privately to point out the offense, then if necessary to take one or two other witnesses to repeat the confrontation, and finally to take the case to the church with a final act of expulsion if the person is unrepentant. At each step, the goal is always seeking repentance and restoration.

"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

(Matthew 18: 15 – 17, NLT)

In practice, the following steps should be taken at TCC:

1. Discipline may be initiated by any member who sees sinful behavior that needs correction. If an Elder initiates such a conversation, it will be as an individual member, and such conversation will not be counted as discipline by the Elders as a whole.
2. If additional witnesses are included for further conversation, the witnesses may either speak to the behavior being confronted or verify the confronted member's unwillingness to repent.



3. “Take the case to the church” shall initially mean taking the conversation to the Elders. Either party may request a meeting with the Elders. Both parties and witnesses will be invited to meet with the Elders. Reasonable efforts will be made to arrange a time that works for all parties involved. However, if the accused is unwilling to attend, the meeting may still move forward so a decision may be reached.

Members will always have the right to bring issues before the Elders after demonstrating that the first two steps (private conversation, then conversation with additional witnesses) were completed.

The Elders will use the standard of “reasonable belief” as proof for accusations, not requiring evidence to be “beyond a reasonable doubt.”

Such conversations will be part of the “executive” session of the Elders’ meeting in order to keep the information from being shared to the congregation at large.

4. Potential corrective actions include:
 - removal from attending the church
 - removal as a member of the church
 - barring fellowship with the church
5. Within one week Elders will inform the unrepentant individual of the decision, preferably in person (but phone, text, email, or letter may suffice).
6. If the accused wishes to appeal the Elders’ decision they may request a congregational meeting. Following the process for calling a special meeting as defined in the Bylaws (Article II, Section 3 “Special Meetings”), the case will be shared with those members who attend. The members will then be asked to affirm the Elders’ decision.
7. If membership is removed, that change will be made in the records of the church.
8. The desired and ultimate goal is repentance, restoration and forgiveness at each and every step in this process.



Charge and Authorization to Every Member

The leadership of Tonganoxie Christian Church offers this charge to members of our church community:

If you ever hear another member speak criticism or slander against anyone, you have authority to interrupt that person and offer admonition.

- "Has someone offended you?"
- "Have you confronted him/her about this?"
- "Can I pray with you that God will restore peace to you and to this person?"
- "We are committed to unity within the body of believers and cannot allow you to talk critically about people who are not present to represent themselves."

As a member of this church, we want you to help resolve this type of gossip/slander immediately. Likewise, if you are ever the one engaged in negative speech, you should expect to be confronted.

Why this strong admonition? Simply because we know that gossip and slander can easily destroy churches. Jesus said the mark of our Christianity that tells the world we are His is our love for each other, and as partners together for the gospel we need to work very hard to nurture that love (John 13: 34-35).



Section 4: Worship Services & Sacraments

1 Policies on Baptism

Adopted by the Elders on July 2, 2026.

Amended on Aug 28, 2026 to include wording in 1.7

1.1 Mode of Baptism: Immersion

TCC's default mode of baptism for anyone baptized at our church is full immersion in water.

Immersion reflects the meaning conveyed by the original Greek word ("*baptizo*") used in the New Testament ("*to immerse, plunge, dip, or submerge*"). While many churches over the centuries have used other modes of baptism (e.g. pouring or sprinkling), our intention is to practice the Christian faith in a way that mirrors and matches what we find in the words of Scripture.

TCC may recognize the legitimacy of other modes and methods of baptisms practiced by our brothers and sisters in Christ elsewhere, but our church's practice regarding baptism will be to fully immerse in water

1.2 Who May Be Baptized

Any person who has demonstrated sufficient mental capacity to understand their need for repentance and forgiveness, and who is able to make the decision to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior may be baptized at TCC. This fits with the words of Acts 2:38 "*Peter replied, 'Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'*" (Acts 2:38, NLT)

We do not practice infant baptism.

Those who have been baptized at another church using a different mode may be immersed at TCC if they want to conform their baptism to the mode found in Scripture. Baptisms done this way should only be done for the sake of obedience. "Re-baptism" as a response to a renewed conviction of sin, a new level of faithfulness, a fear that the first baptism was insufficient, etc, will be discouraged.



1.3 Who May Baptize

At Tonganoxie Christian Church, we encourage parents, elders of the church, volunteer leaders, friends, and *any* paid staff to be present “in the baptistry,” immersing people as they make decisions to follow Jesus. The act of baptizing another is not the task nor responsibility of the Senior Minister alone. Those who baptize another, though, must also be baptized believers first.

1.4 Where Baptism May Occur

Baptisms typically occur in the church’s baptistry in the Worship Center. However, we also encourage baptism in other venues, whether swimming pools, natural bodies of water, etc., that may be available to people for such a purpose, (i.e. a parent immersing their child at summer camp, or a friend immersing a friend at their personal or neighborhood pool, etc.), in keeping with the spirit of the eunuch’s comment in Acts 8:36-38, “...*Look – there’s some water! Why can’t I be [immersed]?*”

1.5 When Baptism May Occur

We will immerse individuals at any time in our building when it may be reasonably available, such as during weekend worship (especially during congregational music/singing), immediately before or after worship services, or during office hours throughout the week. The building is also “available” despite being otherwise closed if those involved in performing the baptism both possess keys to access the building and know how to turn on the water!

Baptism at a location other than the church should be done in compliance with permission and access as controlled by the owners of that location (e.g. A person should not climb a fence to access a swimming pool at midnight without first getting the owner’s permission).

1.6 Baptism and Membership

Those who are baptized at TCC or by a member of TCC will not automatically become members of the local congregation. Newly baptized believers must still follow the procedures of membership set in place in our Bylaws (Article II).



1.7 Baptismal Declaration

To provide consistency in the administration of baptism, the following wording should be used by those authorized to baptize.

Prior to baptism, the person being baptized should repeat the confession of faith:

"I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and I accept Him as my Lord and Savior."

When being baptized, the person baptizing should say:

"Because of your confession of faith, I now baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—buried in His likeness and raised to new life!"

The wording may be adjusted slightly for clarity or personal expression, but the declaration should retain these essential elements:

- Baptism is performed in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Baptism portrays being buried with Christ.
- Baptism portrays being raised to new life in Christ.

Those administering baptism should speak the declaration clearly and audibly so that the congregation and the person being baptized can understand the significance of the moment.