

Constitution

of the

Unalaska Reformed Church

Unalaska, Alaska

2016

Article I: Name

The name of this church is Unalaska Reformed Church.

Article II: Purpose & Mission Statement

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which will be the ultimate purpose in all of its activities. The church glorifies God by loving Him in obedience to His commands through 1) worshipping Him, 2) proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, 3) equipping the saints through regular Bible study and instruction, 4) encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic and international, 5) encouraging biblical fellowship among believers and 6) administering the sacraments of baptism and communion.

Mission Statement

We are a church, founded upon the Gospel, spreading a passion for the glory of God by equipping His people to live for Him, proclaim the gospel to all nations, and to love and enjoy Him forever.

Article III: Affirmations of Faith

See Separate [URC Member Affirmation of Faith](#)

See Separate [URC Elder Affirmation of Faith](#)

Article IV: Membership

Section I: Membership Covenant

See Separate [URC Member Covenant](#)

Section II: Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, as a symbol of their death, burial and resurrection, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Member Affirmation of Faith and must promise to keep the biblical commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

Section III: Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants must be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and must at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section IV: Responsibilities and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the responsibilities outlined in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time and material resources each has received from God. Only members of this congregation are entitled to serve in the ministries of the church; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Section V: Associate Membership

Students, seasonal workers and others temporarily residing in Unalaska who are members of an evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. A letter of commendation will be sought from the applicant's home church.

Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members except that 1) when absent from Unalaska for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services and 2) while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings they will not be eligible to stand for any office or to vote.

Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the elders shall notify the elders of the home church of that termination. Associate membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in Unalaska.

Section V: Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

- 1) Church discipline can include admonition by elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period of time, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5).
- 2) The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22);
- 3) For the instruction in righteousness and the good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24-25);
- 4) For the purity of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2);
- 5) For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10); and
- 6) Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12).

Section VI: Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death, and may do so after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church

discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meetings of the members.

The church will have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other reason.

Article IV: Meetings

Section I: Worship Meetings

Worship services will be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section II: Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every quarter, at some time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership.

An elder designated by the elders shall preside as a moderator at all members' meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present.

A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level.

At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The date, time and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

Article V: Officers

Section I: Summary

The biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of secretary and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section II: Elders

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church every three years.

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any member's meeting of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the sacraments of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the position of vocational elder.

The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. The responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons and the membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a specially called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following members' meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

Section III: Deacons

The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provision on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. They shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of three years and may only be elected to another term after one year.

Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodation for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration.

The deacons shall receive, hold and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

The deacons, with the greater agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

Section IV: Secretary

It shall be the duty of the secretary to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the elders, deacons or the church.

The secretary shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year.

In the absence or incapacity of the secretary the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church secretary.

The secretary shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

Section V: Treasurer

The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, deacon, or paid staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks or financial institutions as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions and of the financial condition of the church.

The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year.

Article VI: Elections

Section I: Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

- 1) Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;
- 2) Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;
- 3) All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;
- 4) The election process shall express the spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section II: Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Name of nominee to serve as elders, deacons, secretary or treasurer shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a 75% majority of all votes cast for the office of elder. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstention will not be considered as votes cast.

The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

Section III: Calling of the Preaching and Teaching Pastor

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential preaching and teaching pastor and, before being asked to express its judgement, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Elder Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as the preaching and teaching pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Article VII: Indemnification

Section I: Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and cost incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section II: Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and no unlawful.

Section III: Procedure

If a quorum of elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

Article VIII: Dispute Resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (e.g. Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

Article 9: Amendments

The Member Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant may be amended by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The Elder Affirmation of Faith can only be amended by a recommendation of the council of Elders to the church.

The constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the church secretary.