

BY-LAWS OF Rockhills Church

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of the congregation and its corporation is Rockhills Church.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of the congregation is the worship of God, the promotion of Christian fellowship among the members, the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and involvement in the needs of society. This is to be done in accordance with the Book of Church Order (BCO) of the Reformed Church in America (of which this congregation is a member).

ARTICLE III – MEMBERS

Section A. – Membership in Rockhills Church shall be granted by the Board of Elders. In order to be deemed a member of Rockhills Church, one needs to complete the “New Members Class” as well as make known their desire to follow Jesus to the Board of Elders.

Section B. - All such members of the Rockhills Church, are members of the corporation and shall remain members as long as they continue in good and regular standing according to the BCO, rules, and discipline of the Reformed Church in America.

ARTICLE IV – Board of Elders and Board of Deacons

Section A. - The Board of Elders shall consist of not less than three or more than eight elders selected from the membership, plus the Lead and Associate Pastors (if applicable). The term of office of the elected members shall be three years (and not be immediately renewable). The members of the Board of Elders shall be the Trustees of the corporation. The size of the Board of Elders may be changed upon recommendation by the Board of Elders and a two-thirds vote of the congregation present at the meeting.

The beginning of the three-year term shall be the later of a) date the elder was installed or b) January 31, 2019. An elder may continue for an additional 3-year term with unanimous consent of the current elder board. An elder may be removed from the elder board during their term by unanimous vote of the other elders.

Section B. The Board of Deacons shall consist of not less than four or more than twelve Deacons elected from the membership. The term of office of the elected members shall be three years (and not be immediately renewable). The size of the Board of Deacons may be changed upon recommendation by the Board of Elders and Deacons and a two-thirds vote of the congregation.

The beginning of the three-year term shall be the later of a) date the deacon was installed or b) January 31, 2019. A deacon may continue for an additional 3-year term with unanimous consent of the current elder board. A deacon may be removed from the diaconate during their term by unanimous vote of the elder board.

Section C. – Elders and Deacons shall be elected from the members of the church in full communion who meet the qualifications of the BCO and the qualifications later on in this document.

Section D. - Nomination for the Elder and Board of Deacons shall be determined as follows:

1. A committee of five shall be chosen by the Board of Elders for each election with 1-2 member(s) of the Board of Elders (with one being named the chairman of the committee), 1-2 member(s) of the Board of Deacons. The other members committee shall be at large members of the congregation. In addition, the Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the committee without a vote and not be included in the group of five. Current staff members shall not be considered for the nominating committee. The Elder board shall make a recommendation of how many slots for Elder and Deacon that need to be filled based on the current needs of the congregation (may be a range). The committee shall then report the nominations for each office to be filled to the Board of Elders. Nominees shall be confirmed by the Board of Elders and then approached by the committee to determine if they are willing to serve in that capacity. The final step for election of Elders and Deacons is a congregational vote to approve the slate of nominees who are willing to serve.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

Section A. - The officers of the Board of Elders shall be President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Clerk. The Senior Pastor shall be President of the Board of Elders. The Vice-President of the Board of Elders, Treasurer and Clerk shall be elected by the Board of Elders from the Board of Elders.

Section B. The Board of Deacons shall elect a Chairman, a Clerk, and a Treasurer from their Membership.

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

Section A. -- The Board of Elders shall meet in regular session at least every other month.

Section B. – The Diaconate shall meet in regular session at least every other month.

Section C. – The Board of Elders and Diaconate shall meet together at least quarterly.

Section D. -- There shall be at least one regular meetings of the congregation each year.

Section E. -- The regular meetings of the congregation shall be held for the purpose of electing the needed number of elders and deacons and for the purpose of presenting the annual financial report, and any other appropriate business.

Section F. -- Special congregational meetings may be called by the Elder Board for the purpose of filling vacancies on the Board of Elders or Board of Deacons and for such other purposes as the Board of Elders shall determine.

Section G. -- All members in good standing shall be qualified to vote and participate in all congregational meetings.

Section H. - At all congregational meetings the President shall preside and the Clerk of the Board of Elders shall act as secretary.

ARTICLE VII – OFFICE OF ELDER

Section A. -- Introduction

The local church is to be governed by a plurality of elders. We find elders in the congregations of the New Testament (Acts 11:30; 15:22; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1) to be appointed men by Paul to oversee the local church (see especially Acts 14:21-23).

There are three Greek words used throughout the New Testament to describe the spiritual leaders in the church. The first word is episkopos, sometimes translated "bishop," usually translated "overseer." The second word is presbyteros, translated "elder" or "presbyter." The third word is poimen, translated "shepherd" or "pastor." These three words—overseer, elder, pastor—refer to the same office. In Acts 20:17, Paul calls for the elders of the church to come to him before he leaves Ephesus. The word for elder in verse 17 is presbyteros. Then in Acts 20:28, while Paul is addressing the elders (the presbyteros), he commands them to keep watch over the flock (poimnion) as overseers (episkopos) and to care for, or pastor (poimen in its verb form), the church of God. These spiritual leaders, then, are called, interchangeably, elders, overseers, and pastors. The three words mean the same thing and refer to the same office we are calling the office of elder.

Serving as an elder is a noble task (1 Tim. 3:1). Elders are worthy of honor and respect (Heb. 13:7, 17) and ought to be esteemed highly in love because of their work in the Lord (1 Thess. 5:12). The elders who direct the affairs of the church are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17). The desire for eldership should not be from selfish ambition (Gal. 5:20), but the desire itself is not bad. As Paul says, "If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task" (1 Tim. 3:1). Those who shepherd God's

flock must do so not under compulsion, but because they are willing and eager to serve (1 Peter 5:2).

Section B. -- Qualifications

Elders must be a man of excellent virtue in relation to God. They must hold firmly to scriptural truths (1 Tim. 3:9; Titus 1:9), be upright and holy (Titus 1:8), able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9), above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2, 9; Titus 1:6), not a recent convert (1 Tim. 3:6), and be a lover of what is good (Titus 1:8).

Elders must be of excellent virtue in relation to others. They should not be quarrelsome (1 Tim. 3:3), nor overbearing (Titus 1:7), nor haughty in their position (1 Peter 5:3), nor a pursuer of dishonest gain (1 Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:2), nor violent but gentle (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7). They must be respectable (1 Tim. 3:2, 8), hospitable (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8), eager to serve (1 Peter 5:2), have a good reputation with outsiders (1 Tim. 3:7), and be examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:3).

Elders must be of excellent virtue in relation to themselves. They should not be quick-tempered (Titus 1:7), nor given to drunkenness (1 Tim. 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7), nor in love with money (1 Tim. 3:3). They must be disciplined (Titus 1:8), sober-minded (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7), and self-controlled (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). Elders must be of excellent virtue in relation to family (if applicable). They must be faithful to their spouse (if applicable) not a philanderer, nor a polygamist (1 Tim. 3:2; 12). They must also manage their family well (if applicable) (1 Tim. 3:4, 12; Titus 1:6).

Section C. -- Responsibilities

In general terms, the elders are charged with directing the affairs of the church and preaching the word of God (1 Tim. 5:17). These two broad tasks are more particularly defined by five responsibilities.

(1) Teach. Elders are to instruct the people of God (Acts 6:2; 20:28-31; Eph. 4:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9). They build up the church in right doctrine and sound teaching and make certain what is preached is in accord with the Scriptures.

(2) Pray. Elders are to be devoted to the ministry of prayer (Acts 6:4). They are available to pray for the sick and anoint them with oil (James 5:14).

(3) Shepherd. Elders are to shepherd the flock of God under their care (1 Peter 5:2). Shepherds are servants who care for the sheep, nurture their growth, and comfort them in their distress. Shepherds are also leaders "set apart for a ministry of watchful and responsible care for all matters relating to the welfare and good order of the church." They have "oversight over the

conduct of the members of the congregation...over the conduct of one another, and of the deacons, and of the minister/s." As servant-leaders, the elders are to manage the membership of the church and reach out to those "in need of special care regarding their spiritual condition and/or [are] not making faithful use of the means of grace".

(4) Discipline. Elders are to "exercise Christian discipline with respect to any who continue in sin without repentance. (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:11-13).

(5) Administer the sacraments. Elders are to administer the sacraments and guard them from being profaned (1 Cor. 11:17-32).

ARTICLE VIII: OFFICE OF DEACON

Section A. -- Introduction

The gifts of service and help are at the heart of the responsibilities of members of the Board of Deacons. These are gifts are given to, and may be exercised by, men and women of the congregation.

Section B. -- Qualification for Deacons

Members of the Board of Deacons are to be men or woman worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the Faith with a clear conscience. Members are also to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything, as well as full of spirit and wisdom. (1 Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:2-3) Finally, individuals nominated to the position of Deacon shall be members of Rockhills Church.

Section C. -- Diaconate Responsibilities

The Diaconate is charged with being responsible for serving those in distress and need; they shall oversee and carry out their work as those concerned with the redemption of humankind. (RCA BCO, Art 6: Sec 2) Within Rockhills Church, particularly, the Board of Deacons is given the responsibility of overseeing the Ministry/Missions budget, which includes Missions, Service and Benevolence. The board of Deacons is also responsible for keeping the congregation focused on the service of others locally and in the world abroad in order to be the Hands and Feet of Christ and to share His Love.