



Church Constitution

The Constitution of the

Welcome Evangelical Church, Belfast



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The Constitution of the Welcome Evangelical Church

Introduction

We, the members of the Welcome Evangelical Church, are grateful to God for our salvation and all blessings of life. We acknowledge His leadership in establishing and carrying on the witness of the Gospel in this area, through this church, and we now establish this Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Name

The name of this church is the "Welcome Evangelical Church."

Purpose

The purpose of this church is to glorify God by holding regular services, training people in the truth of the Bible, building up Christians through the faithful teaching of God's Word and encouraging other Christian activities in the local community.

Statement of Faith

SCRIPTURE: We believe the Bible, as set out in the Old and New Testaments. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given in entirety the Word of God, is without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

GODHEAD: We believe there is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons - The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable, holy, just, wise and love. He is the almighty Creator, Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all things according to His sovereign will for His own glory.

- We believe that God the Father is the first person of the Trinity.
- We believe that Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, who took on Himself the nature of man, with all its essential qualities and ordinary frailties – except that He is sinless,
- We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. By Him the prophets were moved to speak the Word of God, and all the writers of the Holy Scriptures inspired to record infallibly the mind and will of God.

Sacraments

Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the Church by Christ as visible signs of the Gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into His Church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and the wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

BAPTISM: We believe that the New Testament ordinance of Baptism, instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, is the public immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Triune God; it is the testimony of that believer's identification by faith with Jesus Christ's death and resurrection as our substitute.

LORD'S SUPPER: We believe that the New Testament ordinance of Communion, instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, is the regular partaking of bread and wine by believers in remembrance of the death of Christ on our behalf. These elements, symbolic of His body and blood, are to be offered to all believers every Lord's Day, preceded on each occasion by thoughtful self-examination of their present walk of obedience in the Faith.

Membership

Membership in the Welcome Evangelical Church will be open to anyone who Gives a clear profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour Has been baptised

Members have responsibilities

...to attend as often as possible the public and social worship of God in this church, to be faithful in private devotions and to honour our Lord and Saviour by a life and conduct becoming the Gospel of Christ

...to support and sustain this church, contributing to its support and of the work it may at any time undertake.

...to preserve the good name of this church.

Discipline

Church Discipline ensures that no member by acts or words will bring shame upon the Lord Jesus Christ or wander from His way without an effort to keep him active in the worship and fellowship. The proper exercise of discipline seeks to maintain the glory of God, the purity of His Church. Proper disciplinary procedures are set forth in Scripture and must be followed. They are:

(1) instruction in the Word

(2) individual's responsibility to admonish one another

(3) if admonition is rejected, then the calling of one or more witnesses

(4) if rejection persists, then the Church must act through admonition, suspension, deposition, and excommunication.

Public Worship

The church will meet each Sunday, and other days such as deemed necessary by the Leadership Committee for worship of God. These meetings will consist of prayer, musical expression of praise to God, preaching, instruction, fellowship and evangelism. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is to be offered to all believers every Lord's Day.

Congregation

The church is a representative and constitutional democracy and the active membership have the privilege and responsibility of giving assent or disapproval in regard to matters of special importance effecting the property of the church, calling or dismissing pastoral staff, electing officers, approving an annual budget, etc. This will be done through regular and special called meetings.

Annual Membership Meeting

The annual meeting of the church members will be held in the first half of each year. This meeting will include reports of the affairs of the church and transact such other business as the leadership determine to be brought before the members. The annual budget will be approved and reports from all organizations of the church will be summarized to the congregation.

Special Membership Meetings

Special meetings of the members may be called at any time by the Pastor.

Notice of Meetings

Notice of all regular or special meetings will be announced from the pulpit for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting.

Accurate records of proceedings should be kept.

GOVERNMENT

Pastor/Teaching Elder

Qualifications

The Pastoral office of a Teaching Elder is first in the Church both in dignity and usefulness. A Pastor/Teacher must meet all the qualification of a Ruling Elder. He must be called to labour in the Word and doctrine, specially gifted to preach, and trained by God in order to serve as a Teaching Elder. He must have formal training or its equivalent Bible education and experience.

Duties

A Pastor/Teacher is to 'feed the flock' by reading, expounding and preaching the Word of God faithfully, assuming a prominent role of leading the church in its worship and ministries of edification and evangelism. He is to serve as an equal member on the Board of Elders, in overseeing the ministry, visiting the congregation and being available for spiritual counsel when needed. He is to maintain a close contact with all boards and organizations of the church. A Teaching Elder may select his own Secretary with the approval of the Leadership Team, and also provide the Stewardship Committee with input and suggestions for the annual budget.

The Pastor, while serving as the leader of the Elders and Leadership Committee, will be the chief shepherd and teacher of the church, and will be accountable to the Leadership Committee for the fulfilment of his ministry. He will be an ex officio member of all committees including the Board of Trustees and will, as representing the Elders and Leadership Committee, oversee the ministry and function of the committees. The Pastor will arrange for and conduct all public and regular services of the church. In the absence of the Pastor, the Leadership Committee, will be responsible for arranging the public services of the church.

Election

A candidate for Pastor/Teacher will be carefully examined by the Leadership Committee, which will serve as the nominating committee, as to his Salvation, doctrine, Christian conduct and call to the ministry. He will be required to state his agreement to the Statement of Faith of this church. The Leadership Committee shall present only one candidate at a time for congregational affirmation. Once approved, he will assume this charge for an indefinite period of time.

Termination

A Pastor/Teacher when resigning is to give thirty days notice. If removed through discipline from the Leadership Committee because of moral reasons, he shall be terminated immediately, but given thirty days severance pay. All rights, responsibilities, and privileges of the office shall cease with termination. The time limit of a Pastor's resignation or dismissal may be shorter if both the Pastor and the church agree.

Elders

Responsibility of Elders

- (a) To work as a team with the Pastor, to shepherd and oversee the flock, including the administration of the ordinances of Baptism and Communion.
- (b) To select and remove all pastors and employees of the Church; prescribe such duties for them consistent with the Scriptures, with law, or with this Constitution; and fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- (c) To establish policies and practices for the church consistent with its purpose.
- (d) To make such disbursements from the funds and properties of the Church as are required to fulfil the purposes of this Church and generally to conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of the Church.

Number of Elders

A plurality of leadership will be present with at least three appointed elders. If there are not three qualified men to be appointed as elders, then a Leadership Committee of four men will be appointed.

Election

Recommendations to fill the office of Elder will be requested from all church members. The Pastor will review all nominations and determine each nominee's qualifications. At the annual meeting, the nominees shall be presented to the members for affirmation. Nominees affirmed by the church members, will assume office immediately. Elders so affirmed will serve for a period of four years and may serve continuously if reaffirmed after the four year term.

Qualifications

This office is one of dignity and usefulness. An elder should be blameless in life, sound in doctrine and able to teach. They should exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel. Elders are to be the husband of one wife, ruling their own houses well and should be well thought of outside the Church. Ruling Elders possess the same authority and eligibility to office as Teaching Elders.

Removal of Elders

An Elder may be removed from office if, after thorough investigation he is found to be spiritually unqualified or physically or mentally unable to perform the responsibilities of an elder.

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Elders shall be held without call or notice each month at a day and time established by the Pastor.

Accurate records of proceedings should be kept.

Biblical Duties

An Elder is to watch over the spiritual affairs of the church, to guide, guard and feed the flock of God according to the principles of the Word of God, to prevent corruption of doctrine or morals. They are to preside over the Sacraments of the church and to lead its people in the Worship of God. An Elder is to visit the people, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the church, evangelize the unconverted and make disciples. They are to pray with and for the people. An Elder is to rule in moral and spiritual matters with wisdom, meekness, loving kindness and firmness.

Deacons

The Elders or Leadership Committee may appoint Deacons, consisting of members possessing the qualifications described below, to be in charge of specific ministries and functions of the church.

Qualifications

Deacons must be above reproach, the husband of one wife. They should be noted for sobriety and discretion, well behaved, hospitable, not prone to violence or contentious, but gentle, and free from the love of money. They should be good leaders in their own home, with dependent children showing them respect and obedience. Deacons must not be new Christians, but men of proven spiritual maturity, sound in doctrine and an active participant in the affairs of the church.

Duties

Deacons are spiritual men who perform practical service in meeting needs and provide relief and complimentary support to the ministry of a local church. They serve under and are responsible to the Ruling Elders for serving communion, providing assistance for Baptisms, receiving the offering, greeting and ushering at the stated meetings of the church. They are to visit the sick, keep records of the membership, and care for those in the flock who have non-spiritual needs. Deacons are to provide for the physical needs of the church and to maintain its properties and equipment. The Deacons are to organize and administer the finances of the church, and work with the Stewardship Committee to provide for the annual budget.

Election

Upon the recommendation of the Pastor, Deacons will be presented for approval to the congregation at the annual business meeting. If affirmed, they will be duly installed to serve a four year term.

Stewardship Committee

Membership

This committee will consist of the Church Secretary, Financial Secretary, Assistant Treasurer and the Amy Carmichael Centre Manager.

Purpose and Duties

The Stewardship Committee serves under and is responsible to the Leadership Committee. Its purpose is to recommend an overall stewardship plan. Stewardship involves:

Ensuring that the values and missions of the Welcome Evangelical Church remain appropriate

Promoting the well-being for each person within the church

Allowing the church to continually develop and adjust

Preparing for the future vitality of the Welcome Evangelical Church

Working with the Pastor and Financial Secretary, the committee is to advise the church in administration of both normal funds and special gifts received during the year for the work of this ministry. Using sound principles of financial management, it is to make regular and annual reports of all funds received and audit its records periodically.

Treasurer

Qualifications: The Treasurer of the church must be above reproach and have a sufficient knowledge in bookkeeping and skill in preparing financial statements to administer the duties of this office.

Duties: The Treasurer will receive, count, classify, deposit and disburse all funds of the church. They will keep a record of all such transactions, and regularly present a financial statement to the Leadership Committee. A report will also be presented at the annual congregational meeting. The Treasurer will be responsible for the payment of funds each week to the account of the church, in a bank designated by the Leadership Committee. They will draw countersigned checks against these funds. Under their direction, there will be a ledger showing the cash amount of all funds and a balance taken at the close of each month. They will also have custody of all legal papers pertaining to the property and finances of the church, such as deeds, abstracts, insurance policies, bonds, notes, etc. These items will be kept in a depository designated by the Leadership Committee and be submitted for audit periodically as directed by that board.

The Treasurer will serve for a period of four years and may serve continuously if reaffirmed after each four year term.

Finances

This church shall be financed according to the Biblical method of tithes and offerings of the congregation.

Auxiliary Organisations

There may be several auxiliary organizations, like Women's Groups, Senior Citizen's Groups and Children's Clubs, which are designed to assist the church in carrying out its stated purposes. No group will be initiated without the consent of the Leadership Committee. These organizations may be self-governing, but always be subject to the control of the church through its Constitution and Policies. They will make reports to the congregation at its annual business meeting.

Administration Committees

To promote efficient function, the Leadership Committee may appoint committees from the church at large. These committees will perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with powers specifically delegated by the Leadership. The general functions of committees are:

- (a) To bring considered recommendations to concerning ministries to the Leadership.
- (b) To provide a wider base of counsel to those who have the oversight of specific ministries.

AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended, changed or added to by the Leadership Committee. At any regular or called congregational meeting such amendments will become effective upon affirmation by the congregation.
The Constitution will be reviewed every four years.