

**THE BYLAWS
OF
COVENANT CHURCH**

*Presbyterian Church in America
Whitestone, Queens, New York*

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this church is Covenant Church, a member of the Presbyterian Church in America.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

Section 1. The purpose of Covenant Church is to glorify God through the relating the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world and through developing spiritual maturity among his people.

Section 2. The purpose of Covenant Church is further delineated in the Statement of Purpose of Covenant Church, which is a full and vital part of these bylaws.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Communicant members of this church shall be persons who have made a credible profession of faith in our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, who believe to have been regenerated, who have been baptized in obedience to Christ's command, whose Christian profession is not contradicted by flagrant sin or false doctrine, who are willing to submit themselves to the government of this church and the denomination, and who have presented themselves to the Session of this church for a witness thereof. Communicant members may be added by a profession of faith, a reaffirmation of faith, or a letter of transfer from a church with which we have fraternal relations. For all received, regardless of age or how received, attendance of a church membership preparation class and examination by the Session prior to reception is required.

Section 2. Non-communicant members of the church are children of communicant members or children under the care of communicant members, who stand to them as foster parents in the place of their parents. One or both parents or foster parents of these children shall be under solemn obligation to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and seek to induce them to accept Christ as their personal Savior when they reach the age of discretion. These children are not entitled to vote in any meeting of the church until they become communicant members, nor are they to partake of the communion until they are fully able to make a profession of faith and to obey the command of self examination as given in I Corinthians 11:28.

Section 3. Associate members are believers temporarily residing too great a distance from their permanent homes to worship and serve regularly in that church of which they are communicant members or due to other legitimate reasons, as determined by the Session, are unable to withdraw membership from their church. Such believers, without ceasing to be communicant members of their home churches, may be received as associate members of this church, and as such, may enjoy all the privileges of worship, fellowship, and service under the care of the Session of this church, except the associate member may not vote in the congregational meetings and may not be members of the Session, Board of Deacons, Diaconal Board, or Departmental Director.

Section 4. Members of the church are expected to regularly attend the services of the church and are encouraged to support wholeheartedly, by their involvement and offerings, the other activities of the church as God enables them.

Section 5. The Session shall review the church membership whenever they deem it necessary. Members, who are

inconsistent in attendance or show indifference toward the life and work of the church, shall be approached by the Session for the purpose of remedying this weakness in their Christian lives.

Section 6. Letters transferring membership may be requested by the Session to a member who seeks to join any evangelical church, provided the request is made by a member in good standing of this church. Members who move out of the area shall be contacted and encouraged to join another body of believers. After six (6) months, their names shall be dropped from the roll of the church unless they show good cause to remain on the roll.

Section 7. The name of any person dropped from the roll of the church for any reason shall be reported to the congregation with the reasons for such action to be given as the Session's discretion. This information is normally to be given during a congregational meeting

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of this church shall be elders and deacons. There shall be a minimum to two elders and one deacon actively serving their respective boards. The ruling elders and deacons shall be elected to office in accordance with the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America (herein referred to as the BOCO.)

Section 2. The government and discipline of this church shall be done by the elders, who are as a whole called the Session. It belongs to the office of the elder, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge, that no corruption of doctrine or morals enters therein. They must exercise government and discipline, and take oversight not only of the spiritual interest of a particular church, but also of the church generally they are called thereunto. They shall visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They

shall instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, and guard the children of the church. All those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of God are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for the people, being careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock.

Section 3. The Session shall have the authority to appoint individuals to be diaconal assistants and department directions for one year terms or to committees for the transaction of its business.

Section 4. It shall be the duty of the Session to supply the pulpit with men whose Christian character and teaching are in accordance with the doctrinal stand of the denomination.

Section 5. The ruling elders shall make a special evaluation of the work of the pastor and the progress of the church before the year-end congregational meeting and present their findings to the congregation at their meeting.

Section 6. From the elders, the Session shall select a clerk. The clerk shall keep an accurate record of all Session and congregational meetings. He shall be responsible for the keeping of a record of the church membership, admissions, dismissions, deaths, baptisms, and ordination services. He shall have custody of the church seal, shall carry in and maintain a complete record of correspondence and such other records as may pertain to his office. He shall also have in custody any other papers, records, or other documents as directed by the congregation or the Session.

Section 7. The Session may perform other such duties as may be defined in the BOCO.

Section 8. The duty of the deacons shall be to minister to those who are in needs, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality among the members of the church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, to distribute these gifts to the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation. In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session.

Section 9. The duties of the diaconal assistants shall be to assist the Board of Deacons in their task and to do any such work as the Session may require.

Section 10. The deacon and the diaconal assistants together shall make up the Diaconal Board. This board shall meet at least quarterly. The Diaconal Board will be solely concerned with the ministry to the needy, to the sick, to the friendless, and to those who may be in distress. The other responsibilities of the deacons shall be done in a separated meeting of the Boards of Deacons. This Diaconal Board shall be chaired by the chairman of the Board of Deacons.

Section 11. If the church treasurer is not a deacon, he/she shall be answerable to the Board of Deacons and to the Session. The church treasurer, who shall be appointed by the Session from the church membership, for a term of three (3) years, shall arrange for the receiving, counting, and crediting of all offerings and monies received by the church in proper form in books provided for this purpose. The treasurer, when requested shall furnish receipts in proper form to those whose behalf he is receiving and crediting funds. The books shall always be

available for inspection by the Session or by a committee for that purpose. The treasurer shall be responsible for the banking of such funds each week to the account of the church, in a bank designated by the Session or Board of Deacons. He shall draw checks against these funds as directed by the Board of Deacons. There shall also be prepared in approved form, under his/her direction, each month, a financial statement showing the true status of the various funds in this account, to be approved by the Board of Deacons. He shall also have prepared in approved form under his/her direction a financial statement showing the true status of all funds for the fiscal year of the church, for presentation at the congregational meeting, at year-end. He shall also have custody of the legal papers pertaining to the property and finances of the church, such as deeds, abstracts, insurance policies, bonds, notes, etc., which shall be kept in a depository designated by the Board of deacons; and any access he may have to this depository shall be made under the direction of the Board of Deacons. The books at any time are to be available to the deacons and must be submitted to audit at least once a year, as directed by the Boards of Deacons.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

Section 1. The fiscal year of the church shall end on December 31 each year.

Section 2. There shall be a minimum of two regular congregational meetings.

Section 3. At a duly called meeting of the congregation, the business of both the congregation and the corporation shall be conducted concurrently. All meetings shall be moderated by the pastor and the Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall moderate appropriate business.

Section 4. During these meetings, nominations for the officers of the church can be presented to the congregation. All nominees for the offices of elder and deacon, who are willing to serve, shall be required to take a formal course in officer preparation before being presented for election. Those who have completed this course will be examined by the Session regarding their commitment to the standards of the church and their calling and gifts for the office which they seek.

Section 5. At the congregational meeting any reports of the officers and the organizations shall be presented to the congregation. Every year, the church's budget shall be presented, elections for offices shall be held, and such other business as may be necessary shall be transacted.

Section 6. The Session shall call a special congregational meeting upon the written request of one fourth (1/4) of the members with the power to vote within two (2) weeks of receiving the request.

Section 7. Any regular or special meeting of the congregation may be constituted a duly called meeting for the transaction of business, providing announcement of said meeting be given from the pulpit two (2) Sundays preceding the said meeting.

Section 8. A quorum for a congregational meeting for Covenant Church is one-third (1/3) of the members on the church roll.

Section 9. A majority vote of the voting members present at any constitutionally called congregational meeting shall be required for the election of officers or to render final decisions in any matter under consideration, except where a higher percentage is required.

Section 10. In the event that the Session decides that any board of the church (Session, Board of Deacons, Diaconal Board) is in need of additional members due to the loss of members by death, transfer, discipline, etc., the Session

shall hold a congregational meeting following the directions of the applicable sections of Article V for the purpose of nominating member(s) to the necessary office(s). The Session shall then called a meeting of the congregation later for the purpose of electing such officer(s), after the nominees have been trained and examined by the Session as necessary.

ARTICLE VI. THE PASTOR

Section 1. The church shall be under the spiritual oversight of a minister, and when the church has no pastor, she shall seek to secure one without delay.

Section 2. Should the pulpit become vacant or the congregation desire an associate pastor, the congregation shall secure a pastor in accordance with the BOCO.

Section 3. Dissolution of the pastoral relation shall be in accordance with the BOCO.

ARTICLE VII. PARLIMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1. In all places where these bylaws may contradict the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America, these bylaws are superceded by the BOCO. The only exception is to those places where these bylaws are more restrictive than the BOCO and do not contradict the BOCO.

Section 2. The rules in the current edition of the Robert's Rules of Order, Newly revised, shall guide the church in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and with the BOCO.

ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS OF THE BYLAWS

These bylaws can be amended by two thirds (2/3) vote of the communicant members present at two (2) consecutive congregational meetings.