

ASSINIBOIA-CHARLESWOOD COMMUNITY CHURCH CONSTITUTION

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ASSINIBOIA-CHARLESWOOD COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Article 1: History and Character

Assiniboia-Charleswood Community Church is a non-denominational local church. The fellowship began as Assiniboia Community Church in 1978 when some families from St. James Gospel Chapel and elsewhere had the desire to worship in their own community in the southwest area of Winnipeg. The emphasis was to be on teaching from the Bible, developing personal relationships, and helping families. The church continued to meet in rented facilities at John Taylor Collegiate until Charleswood Baptist Church graciously made their building available and asked to join with ACC. The church was renamed Assiniboia-Charleswood Community Church and the congregation moved into the building on Charleswood Road in 1991. Since then, the church has grown. A significant expansion of the facility was completed in 2002 with the addition of a new sanctuary, nursery, kitchen and foyer bringing the building to its present size.

Today, the original purpose has not changed as people come from a variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds to worship Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and to love and serve one another.

Article 2: Purpose

Assiniboia-Charleswood Community Church believes that the chief end of people is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. This involves *five* main purposes:

1. **EXALTING:** To exalt Christ as a community for worship and praise.
2. **EDIFYING:** To edify believers by instruction in God's Word.
3. **EQUIPPING:** To equip people for ministry by providing opportunities for service in the church and in the world.
4. **EVANGELIZING:** To evangelize people, locally and around the world, by the personal and public proclamation of the Gospel, and the sending and support of Christian workers.
5. **EXPRESSING:** To express Christ's love by caring fellowship in the church and social concern for the world.

Article 3: Statement of Faith

Section 1: The Bible (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 19:7-11; Matt. 5:17-19; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21)
The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings and the divine and final authority of all Christian faith and life. There are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

Section 2: God (Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 48:16; Matt. 28:19; James 2:19)

There is but one God, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three possess the same nature, attributes and glory, but are distinct in office and activity.

Section 3: God the Father (John 4:24; Isaiah 44:6)

God the Father is an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of human beings. He hears and answers prayer, and He saves from sin and death all those who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

Section 4: Jesus Christ (1 John 5:20; Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:20; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Romans 4:25; Eph. 2:8-9; Heb.4:14)

Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life. He performed miracles and taught with wisdom and authority. He died an atoning death as a substitute for our sins. He was raised bodily from the grave, ascended into heaven where He perpetually intercedes for His people. He will return to the earth in a visible and personal way.

Section 5: The Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13,14; Eph. 4:30; Eph. 5:18; John 14:16-18; John 16:8-14; Romans 8:9; Gal. 5:18)

The Holy Spirit indwells each believer. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, to convict people, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.

Section 6: Salvation (Gen. 1:27; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12; Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Peter 1:5)

People are created in the image of God but all have sinned. Every member of the human race is separated from God, and is by nature sinful and lost. Salvation is entirely of God's grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. Those who receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.

Section 7: The Church (Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-28; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Gal. 3:27-28; Eph. 1:22-23)

All believers are part of the body of Christ, the church. Believers are all people who have received Jesus Christ as their Saviour and follow Him as their Lord. With Jesus Christ as the Lord and Head, each local expression of the church has the responsibility to govern its own affairs for the purpose of extending Christ's kingdom in the world.

Section 8: The Ordinances (Acts 2:41-42; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Romans 6:1-4; Col. 2:12)

Baptism and the Communion are ordinances to be observed today. Believer's Baptism illustrates the union of a believer with Christ in His death and resurrection and publicly declares his/her commitment to Him. Communion is a celebration in which believers fellowship together, worship the Lord, proclaim His life, death, and resurrection and anticipate His return. All believers are welcome to participate in this communion. Baptism and Communion are not to be regarded as means of salvation.

Section 9: The Future (John 14:1-6; Acts 1:11; 1 Thes. 4:14-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 19:11- 20:6; Rev. 20:12-13; Phil. 1:23; 2 Thes. 1:8-9)

Jesus Christ soon will return physically and personally to the earth. His return is the fulfillment of the blessed hope set before the believer. He will receive His believing people to Himself and will visibly establish His kingdom. All those who have died will experience the bodily

resurrection of the dead: the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, and the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting punishment.

Section 10: Witness (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24: 45-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:7-8; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

All believers are ambassadors and representatives of Christ. They are called to bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ in all the world through their words, character, conduct and service.

Article 4: Baptism, Communion and Membership

Section 1: Baptism

1.1 Mode of Baptism

We teach and practice believers' baptism by immersion as a public symbol of faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour. We recognize believers' baptism by other means but will re-baptize by immersion those who desire to take this step. We do not recognize infant or child baptism but we practice Child Dedication by parents.

1.2 Baptism and Membership

We do not require individuals to be baptized to join the church as a member. In order to serve as an Elder or a Deacon/Deaconess, we require individuals to be baptized and to become a member of the church. A general brochure and an Information Package on Baptism are available.

Section 2: Communion

2.1 Communion is an ordinance of the church. All believers are welcome to participate in this celebration at ACC. See the Article 3, Section 8 and the general brochure on Communion.

Section 3: Membership

All believers are part of the body of Christ, the church. Believers are called to commit themselves to a local church community for worship, fellowship, instruction, service and discipline. The local church community therefore becomes the believer's spiritual family.

3.1 Criteria for Covenant Membership

A member shall:

- i) have personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour;
- ii) sincerely endeavour to conduct his/her life in accordance with Biblical principles;
- iii) accept and concur with ACC's organization and structure;
- iv) affirm ACC's Statement of Faith, Mission, Purpose and Vision.

3.2 Becoming a Covenant Member

i) A person desiring to become a member of ACC shall express his/her interest to the Elders, and members of the Elders Team shall subsequently meet with the individual.

ii) The individual will share their spiritual experience with the Elders and will subsequently be instructed with respect to essential aspects of church membership.

iii) At such point as the Elders' Team is satisfied that the criteria identified in 1.1 have been met, the individual shall be welcomed as a member of the ACC community. An announcement will be shared at an appropriate gathering of the church family.

iv) Children under the age of 18 are generally included with their parents as church members. However, upon reaching the age of 18 it is anticipated that individual decisions regarding church membership will be made.

3.3 Responsibilities of Covenant Members

Before God all members shall diligently strive to:

i) love and encourage all members of the church family;

ii) support the ministries of the church through prayer, attendance, active participation and financial giving;

iii) exercise their spiritual gifts within the church.

3.4 Cessation of Covenant Membership

An individual may cease to be a member by:

i) requesting that his/her membership be discontinued;

ii) transferring his/her membership to another church;

iii) disciplinary action by the Elders' Team;

iv) voluntary non-attendance for an extended period of time.

Article 5: Government and Organization

Section 1: Autonomy

Assiniboia-Charleswood Community Church is an independent, non-denominational local church. The church is subject to the Word of God and the authority of God alone. At the same time, we value the fellowship of the entire Body of Christ, and will seek opportunities for visible expression of our oneness in Christ.

Section 2: Elders

2:1 Authority

The New Testament teaches that the local congregation should be under the direction of a group of Elders. They are men who are gifted by God to serve as leaders in the local church.

2:2 Qualifications

Each Elder must have the necessary spiritual qualifications. He must, as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-10, have a sense of divine calling to ministry and possess the confidence of the congregation because of the way he is functioning among them as a servant and shepherd. An elder is characterized by spiritual maturity, as seen in his personal character, his ability to teach God's Word, his personal leadership, and his ability to be an example to God's people.

2:3 Appointment

The Elders will be responsible to consider prayerfully men who have the Biblically-stated spiritual and moral qualifications for leadership. The congregation is encouraged to submit to the Elders the names of men whom they consider to be potential Elders. The number of Elders will fluctuate according to the availability of qualified men and the needs of the church. The men chosen and willing to serve will be presented by the Elders to the church for affirmation and then will be recognized publicly and formally. An initial term of three years is the length of service for first-time Elders. Upon completion of this initial term and with the affirmation from fellow Elders and the congregation, appointment of the individual becomes permanent. Those who are chosen to serve as Pastors must also meet the biblical requirements of an Elder.

2:4 Duration

As long as an Elder is willing to serve, possesses the confidence of the congregation and has the requisite spiritual and personal qualifications, he should be recognized as an Elder. An Elder may resign at any time for personal or private reasons or take a temporary leave of absence in consultation with his fellow-Elders. An Elder who no longer enjoys the confidence of the congregation or his fellow-Elders will be required to withdraw from this position. Since the role of an Elder is a gift and not an office, there is no time limit to this ministry. However, Elders are encouraged to seek renewal and refreshment by taking a one-year sabbatical as needed and as long as there are enough Elders to meet the current needs of the congregation.

2:5 Relationships and Responsibility

Under God, the Elders are responsible for the direction of congregational life and all ministries are ultimately accountable to them. The primary concern of the Elders is spiritual leadership, which includes pastoral care and a commitment to "prayer and the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:4). They are also responsible for the overall direction of the total ministry of the church. The Elders will be responsible to structure the church's life in a manner which maximizes the involvement of the congregation.

Section 3: Deacons and Deaconesses

3:1 Qualifications

The Biblical qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 emphasize the spiritual maturity and practical godliness of those who serve as Deacons and Deaconesses. They minister under the authority of the Elders as servant-leaders in the congregation.

3:2 Appointment

The Elders will be responsible to consider prayerfully members of the congregation who have biblically stated qualifications to serve as Deacons and Deaconesses. The congregation is encouraged to submit to the Elders the names of people whom they consider to be potential Deacons and Deaconesses. The people chosen and willing to serve will be presented by the Elders to the church for affirmation and then will be recognized publicly and formally.

3:3 Duration

A Deacon or Deaconesses may initially serve for three years and the appointment may be renewed, as long as they possess the confidence of the congregation, have the requisite qualifications, and continue to be involved in the operation of the church. A Deacon or Deaconesses may resign at any time or take a temporary leave of absence in consultation with the Elders. A Deacon or Deaconess who no longer enjoys the confidence of the congregation will be required to withdraw from his/her position. Deacons and Deaconesses are encouraged to seek renewal and refreshment by taking a one-year sabbatical as needed as long as there are enough Deacons and Deaconesses to meet the current needs of the congregation.

3:4 Relationships and Responsibility

The Deacons and Deaconesses are accountable to the Elders and are responsible to chair various committees crucial to the operation of the church as determined by the Elders.

Section 4: Areas of Ministry

4:1 The church is involved in various areas of ministry. The Annual Report provides an on-going description of them.

4:2 The Elders' Committee is responsible for the organization and appointment of the various ministries and committees in consultation with the congregation.

4:3 Members of the congregation are given opportunity annually to express interest in serving in the various ministries or committees or help in some capacity.

Section 5: Trustees

5.1 Mandate

The Trustees are the legal representatives of the church in all corporate matters. The Trustees shall serve as the Board of Directors for the church which is incorporated as a Religious Society, in the city of Winnipeg, in the province of Manitoba.

5.2 Composition

The Trustees shall consist of the current group of elders (except as stated below) who have been

selected from the congregation according to the terms specified in Article 5, Section 2 of the Constitution of Assiniboia-Charleswood Community Church. Other members of the congregation may be appointed by the Elders Committee to serve with them as Trustees to a maximum of 15 persons.

Note: Staff who receive remuneration may not serve as Trustees.

5.3 Officers

The following individuals will serve as officers of the Trustees.

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|-----------------|---|
| President: | Chairman of the Elders Committee |
| Vice-President: | An Elder appointed by the Elders Committee |
| Secretary: | An individual appointed by the Elders Committee |
| Treasurer: | Chairman of the Finance Committee |

Article 6: Ministering Staff

Section 1: Senior Pastor (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 5:17)

The Senior Pastor on staff will serve with the Elders, and be responsible to exercise a pastoral-teaching ministry to the whole congregation. He will provide leadership to other staff members. He is accountable to the Elders. Should the other Elders come to unanimous conviction that his ministry is completed, he will resign.

Section 2: Selecting a Senior Pastor (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Titus 1:6-9)

In the event of a vacancy in this position, the Elders will form a Pastoral Search Committee to recommend candidates to the Elders. A candidate must possess the biblical qualifications to serve as an Elder, and the gifts requisite for public ministry.

Section 3: Associate Staff (Acts 6:1-7; Acts 15:36-41; Eph. 4:11-13)

Associate staff will be appointed by the Elders as they see the need. Their daily activities and ministries are performed under the direction of the Senior Pastor. The titles, duties and responsibilities of position to be filled by associate staff will be approved by the Elders. A written letter of resignation to the Elders is required if they choose to resign. Removal of an individual from a staff position is the responsibility of the Elders.

Article 7: Congregational Meetings

Section 1: Congregational Participation

The Elders' Committee is responsible for ensuring that individuals within the congregation are encouraged to participate in the activities and affairs of the church. Sensitivity, discernment, patience and openness by the Elders are involved in fulfilling this servant-leader responsibility.

Section 2: Annual General Meeting

An Annual General Meeting of the congregation will be held each year not later than February 28th. The Financial Statements for the previous year and a Proposed Budget for the new year shall be presented.

Section 3: Communication Meetings

Communication Meetings will be held two to four times a year to provide for communication within the church regarding the various activities and matters of the church.

Article 8: Revisions

Section 1: Review of the Constitution

This Constitution has been prepared and approved by the Elders' Committee in consultation with the church members.

The Constitution will be reviewed by the Elders' Committee and the church members every five years.

Section 2: Involvement of the Congregation

Any member of the church may submit written suggestions for changes to the Constitution. These changes will be considered in the periodic review of the Constitution (as required but at least every five years).

The Elders' Committee is responsible for ensuring that there is opportunity for effective participation by the church members in the on-going review of the Constitution and that the Constitution reflects the collective expression of the church members.