

Hopkins Community Reformed Church

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church shall be the Hopkins Community Reformed Church (hereafter known as HCRC).

ARTICLE II: STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. HCRC shall have a statement of faith.
2. The statement of faith shall serve as a guide to the church and a witness to the public as to the nature and content of the beliefs of the congregation of HCRC.
3. The Minister(s) of Word and Sacrament and board of Elders as prescribed in Article IV.5 of the HCRC Bylaws shall create and regularly review the statement of faith, bringing reports and proposed changes to the consistory and congregation for affirmation and approval. A report shall be given at the annual congregational meeting as prescribed in Article VII.1.
4. Adoption, updates, and amendments of the HCRC statement of faith shall happen through the following procedure:
 - a. The Elders and Minister(s) of Word and Sacrament shall prayerfully review the Statement of Faith at least once a year, giving consideration to any questions, suggestions, and clarifications sought by the congregation. Special consideration will be given to subjects of cultural significance as well as changes in denominational stances on particular issues of faith and life. The Elders and Minister(s) of Word and Sacrament may consult other individuals, whether inside or outside of HCRC, for more exploration and to develop a deeper understanding of the subjects being considered at their discretion.
 - b. A report will be made to the consistory, as defined in Article IV.4, for prayerful consideration and discussion. Proposed changes shall be voted upon by the consistory; a two-thirds majority shall constitute passage which stands as a recommendation to bring them to the congregation.
 - c. The congregation shall be gathered for a meeting to discuss the recommended updates. This may take place at the annual congregational meeting or at a special meeting convened as prescribed in Article VII.4
 - d. Proposed changes to the statement of faith must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the congregation.
5. The Statement of Faith shall be kept on file in the HCRC church office and made available upon request. The Statement of Faith shall also be a part of the content available on the church website.

ARTICLE III: AFFILIATION

HCRC is affiliated with the Southwest Michigan Classis and the Regional Synod of the Great Lakes of The Reformed Church in America.

ARTICLE IV: THE CONSISTORY

1. The governing body of HCRC shall be the Consistory.
2. The Consistory shall meet at least quarterly to carry on church business.
3. Regular meetings of the Consistory shall be open to the congregation unless other notice is given.
4. The Consistory shall be composed of **Pastor(s), as well as** Elders and Deacons elected by the approved nomination and election process as prescribed in Article VII.2 of the HCRC Bylaws.
5. There shall be up to five Elders, elected to three-year terms. Two Elders shall be elected each year with one to be elected every third year. An active, serving elder shall serve as representative to Classis meetings where possible. An elder from among the great consistory may also serve as a representative to Classis when necessary.
6. There shall be up to six Deacons, elected to three-year terms. Two Deacons shall be elected each year. A Deacon may serve as an ex-officio representative at each meeting of Classis.
7. Nominating Procedure:
 - A. **The** Consistory will prepare a ballot for the confessing membership of HCRC to nominate candidates(s) for the position of Deacon and Elder. The candidate list will be made of all eligible confessing members of HCRC. The ballot will note individuals who are ineligible based upon

Hopkins Community Reformed Church

BYLAWS

current or past Consistory service as well as those with immediate family members currently serving who would be serving concurrent terms.

- B. The Consistory will determine among the top vote getters, ~~the triple-slate ballot~~ and shall seek to fill a triple slate ballot when possible. The final ballot shall be approved by the Consistory and presented to the congregation for the approved election process as prescribed in Article VII.2 of the HCRC Bylaws.
- C. The ~~triple-slate~~ ballot will be published three consecutive Sundays prior to the Congregational Meeting.

- 8. After serving one full three-year term, members of Consistory shall be ineligible to serve for three years.
- 9. Immediate family members are ineligible to serve concurrent terms on consistory with other family members. Immediate family is defined as Parents, Children, Spouses, and Siblings. In-law relationships are not considered to be immediate family.
- 10. Individuals serving as paid staff members are ineligible to serve as Elders and/or Deacons regardless of membership status within the church. Immediate family of said staff members are ineligible for nomination and service as Elder and/or Deacon.
- 11. In the event of the death, retirement, voluntary abdication, or removal of a member of Consistory with six or more months remaining in their term, Consistory will fill the position following the prescribed method in the Reformed Church in America Book of Church Order (hereafter known as the RCA BCO) 1.1.2 Sec. 14.f.
- 12. The officers of Consistory shall be as follows:
 - A. Will be selected annually by the Consistory.
 - B. In addition, the following will fulfill the RCA BCO requirements for the Consistory:
 - i. The Senior Pastor will be the RCA BCO position of "President"
 - ii. An Elder will fulfill the RCA BCO position of "Vice President"
 - iii. A Deacon will be selected by Consistory for the RCA BCO position of "Chairman of the Deacons"
 - iv. An Elder or Deacon will fulfill the RCA BCO position of "Clerk"
 - v. A Deacon will be chosen for the position of "Treasurer"
 - C. To facilitate the continuity of service, the consistory shall also choose "assistants" for the positions of "Vice President," "Clerk," "Chairman of the Deacons," and "Treasurer" for the purpose of training and equipping said persons for future service.
- 13. The Executive Team, which shall be made up of two elders and two deacons, shall be composed of the following:
 - A. The Senior Pastor
 - B. The Vice President of Consistory
 - C. The Chairman of the Deacons
 - D. The Clerk of Consistory
 - E. One outstanding Elder or Deacon at large, based on the office held by the Clerk of Consistory, to fill the required amount of Elders and Deacons for the Executive Team.

ARTICLE V: MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

- 1. The role of the Consistory is to lead and govern HCRC as representatives of Jesus Christ to the church. The Consistory, as a body, also serves as representatives of the church, encouraging the missions and ministries of the church while seeking and discerning God's will for the direction of the church. The Consistory is empowered to govern and enforce the policies and procedures of HCRC, providing for the orderly and safe function and mission of the church both within its walls and in the world as well. The Consistory shall also fulfill the Responsibilities of the Consistory as defined by the RCA BCO 1.1.2.

Hopkins Community Reformed Church

BYLAWS

2. The role of the Senior Pastor is one of servant leadership. The Senior Pastor works to lead, equip, and empower both the consistory and the congregation for its ministry in the world through the preaching of the Word, teaching, the administration of the Sacraments. The Senior Pastor shares responsibility with the Elders and Deacons and members of the congregation for their mutual Christian growth.
3. The role of the Executive Team is to act on behalf of the consistory during interim times, between consistory meetings, and in the event that immediate decisions must be made or when the consideration of the full consistorial body is not needed. In addition, the Executive Team serves as the personnel committee and is responsible for the annual review of the church staff. The Executive Team does not have the power to hire or terminate with regards to the employment of church staff.
4. The ministry teams of the church shall be determined by and are accountable to the consistory. Ministry teams exist to equip, empower, and support the ministries of the church as well as those serving in them.

ARTICLE VI: THE SACRAMENTS AND SERVICES OF WORSHIP

1. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be served at least quarterly as prescribed by the RCA BCO 1.1.2 Sec. 11.c.
2. The Sacrament of Baptism shall be administered upon the approval of the Board of Elders at any regularly scheduled worship service, which is agreed upon by the Pastor and participants as prescribed by the RCA BCO 1.1.2. Sec. 11.d.
3. The consistory shall provide for the services of worship in accordance with the RCA BCO 1.1.2 Sec. 10-11.
4. Services of worship shall be in accordance with the Liturgy of the Reformed Church in America, or with the principles set forth in the Directory for Worship of the Reformed Church in America.
5. Services of worship outside the of the normal Sunday worship (i.e. weddings, funerals, etc.) shall be approved by the consistory.
6. No service of worship shall be permitted that contradicts the doctrines and teachings of the Holy Bible or that stands in violation of the Statement of Faith as described in Article II.1 of the HCRC Bylaws.
 - A. HCRC, the church, its staff, and any of its pastors or approved guest pastors shall not perform same sex weddings for members or non-members but will conduct wedding ceremonies for one man and one woman as biologically **and genetically** defined by their natural birth.
 - B. No marriage ceremony will be conducted at HCRC unless it involves a Christian marriage between one man and one woman as biologically **and genetically** defined by their natural birth.
7. The Senior Pastor, any associate pastors, church staff, and consistory shall not participate in a service of worship that contradicts the doctrines and teachings of the Holy Bible or that stands in violation of the Statement of Faith as described in Article II of the HCRC Bylaws.

ARTICLE VII: THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

1. The voting members of the congregation (as defined by the RCA BCO) shall meet annually near the end of the fiscal year: to receive the financial reports of the current calendar year-to-date; to elect Elders and Deacons, to receive a report regarding the HCRC statement of faith, and to approve the proposed church budget. Concerns may be expressed by members at the congregational meeting, but no decision will be made on these matters unless the concerns have been brought to the Consistory prior to the congregational meeting. If at the Consistory meeting, the matter was not resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, it shall be added to the agenda for congregational consideration to members at this time.
2. Election procedure: At the regular congregational meeting, the congregation shall vote to affirm the names of the slate of elders and deacons nominated for that year. The names of the triple slate of candidates will be placed in a container and, after prayer, and trusting in the providence of God in

Hopkins Community Reformed Church

BYLAWS

accordance with Scripture's precedence for the casting of lots (Luke 1:9, Acts 1:26, Proverbs 16:33, Proverbs 18:18), names shall be drawn to determine who God has called to serve. This process shall happen separately for the office of Elder and the office of Deacon.

3. Annual Budget: The consistory shall provide an annual budget proposal for congregational approval. The proposed budget will be posted and made available for a minimum of three weeks prior to the congregational meeting.
4. The congregation shall be called together by the Consistory for a special meeting to consider such important matters as the calling of a minister, the expenditure of a large sum of money, the undertaking of a major project, changes to the HCRC statement of faith, or to discuss congregational concerns. Such meetings shall occur after 3 Sunday's written notice to the congregation except in matters of emergency in which case the consistory will make all due effort to communicate meeting time, location, and content via all available means.
5. Absentee Voting: For all meetings in which a congregational vote is necessary, absentee ballots will be made available at least 1 week prior to the meeting. The consistory shall when necessary, accept voting electronically for any voting members who are unable to be present at the meeting and cannot obtain an absentee ballot.
6. The congregational meeting shall be opened with devotions including the reading of scripture and prayer, and closed with prayer.
7. No congregational meeting shall interrupt, impact, or otherwise impinge upon a normal service of worship held within the church.

ARTICLE VIII: ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

1. These by-laws shall become official when approved by two-thirds of the voting members (as defined by the RCA BCO), and maybe amended by a two-thirds vote of the congregation with notice having been given on three consecutive Sundays that an amendment of the bylaws is under consideration.
2. Any changes to HCRC policies and/or procedures must be approved by the consistory and then published, making it known and available to the congregation.

Amended on ~~November 6, 2019~~ **November 14, 2021**