

**DARLINGTON
CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN
CHURCH**

**CONSTITUTION
&
BY-LAWS**

Revised-Amended November 1998
Voted on and Approved
December 1998

Revised-Amended May 2008
Voted on and Approved
June 2008

**CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION**

ARTICLE I

The name of this church shall be the Congregational Christian Church of Darlington, Indiana.

ARTICLE II

Purpose of the Constitution

The purpose of this constitution and by-laws is to maintain and perpetuate the best and most equitable business regulations within this church, to give the church and its members a mutual understanding as to their duties, limits of power and responsibility, insuring promptness, regularity, fairness, and obedience to the divine teaching that among Christians all things should be done decently and in order.

ARTICLE III

Object

The object of this church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for the purpose of sharing in the lives of men, individually and collectively, especially as that will is set forth in the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE IV

Policy

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its Head and finds in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by the Holy Spirit, its guidance in matters of faith and discipline.

The government of this church is vested in its active members who are in good standing and of fourteen years of age, and is subject to no other ecclesiastical body.

ARTICLE V

Doctrine

Section 1.

- A. This church believes that the Bible, both The Old and The New Testament, is the only true guide in faith and practice. The Old Testament is fulfilled, modified, and explained in The New Testament.

Section 2.

- A. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the infallible authoritative Word of God.
- B. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- C. We believe in the Deity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return with power and glory.
- D. We believe that all who in faith accept the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby become the children of God.
- E. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- F. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- G. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in Christ.

ARTICLE VI

Covenant

Those received into the membership of this church will publicly assent to the following covenant:

We, the members of this church, do affectionately welcome you to fellowship with us in the blessings of the Gospel, and covenant together, God helping us, that we will as strangers and pilgrims refrain from fleshly lusts, that we will put away from us all

bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking, and to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven us; that we will as we have opportunity, do good unto all men, especially unto them which are of the household of faith; that we will remember them which have the rule over us who speak unto us the word of God; that we will submit to the loving oversight and discipline of the members and officers of this church, and that we will give as God has prospered us, not grudgingly or of necessity, but cheerfully to the support of the ministry, expense of the church and relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel through all the world.

ARTICLE VII

Membership

Section 1 - Qualification

- A. The church will accept all such persons that accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, and give evidence of Christian purpose and pledge their allegiance to Christ and His cause.
- B. Members of other churches applying for admission may be received by letter or other evidence of standing and Christian experience.
- C. Members may be received upon presentation by the minister at any church service and by receiving the right hand of fellowship.
- D. New members coming into the church will meet with the Pastor and one or two members of the Board of Deacons. They will be given a copy of the Constitution and will go through it with the board so they may understand the governing of the Darlington Congregational Christian Church.
- E. The church encourages baptism by immersion.

Section 2 - Duties

Duties of members are expressed in church covenant.

Section 3 - Letters of Transfer or Dismissal

The Pastor or The Board of Deacons may grant letters of transfer and commendation to any church to those who are in good standing and active in the work. Letters of dismissal, at their own request, may be granted to those who may be indifferent.

Section 4 - Inactive Members

- A. Members whose addresses have long been unknown or who for a period of two years, in spite of kindly approaches, have not communicated with the church or contributed to its support, may, by recommendation of the Board of Deacons to the Official Board, be transferred to the inactive list. From the date of such transfer, such persons shall cease to be reported on the active membership roll, and voting privileges cease.
- B. If an inactive member becomes active by attendance and financial support, his name shall be automatically restored to active membership by the clerk.

ARTICLE VIII

Officers

Section 1 - General

- A. The officers of this church shall be the Pastor, the Deacons, the Deaconesses, Moderator, Clerk, Church Treasurer, Organist, Assistant Organist, three Trustees, Benevolence Treasurer, Chorister, and Assistant Chorister, Pianist, and Assistant Pianist.
- B. The church may elect other officers as may seem necessary.
- C. No one member of the congregation shall hold more than two elected official offices in the church.
- D. The election of Moderator, Clerk, Church Treasurer, Organist, Assistant Organist, Benevolence Treasurer, Chorister, and Assistant Chorister, Pianist and Assistant Pianist shall be held at the December business meeting and taking office January 1.
- E. Vacancies may be filled at any regular or special business meeting.
- F. The church may remove from office any official, for cause, by a majority vote upon recommendation of the official board.
- G. Officers of the church shall be nominated by a committee of three appointed by the moderator at the November business meeting. Nominations from the floor at the time of the election are also allowed, except in the case of deacons, who are nominated only by the existing board of deacons and pastors.
- H. A person shall be a member in good standing of the church for one year before they can hold any office listed below in the Church or Sunday School:

Church - Deacons, Trustees, Moderator, Clerk,
Treasurer and Benevolence Treasurer.
Sunday School - Superintendents, Assistant Super-
intendent, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Section 2 - Pastor

- A. The pastor shall be an experienced Christian in character and reputation, known as one living a true God-fearing life and having the gift and ability to preach and teach the Word of God. He shall lead a careful personal life, and shall be a thorough student of the Word of God. The pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the Board of Deacons. He shall have under his care all services of public worship in cooperation with the various boards and committees. He shall be an ex-officio and

advisory member of all boards and committees and shall be the chairman of the January meeting of the planning committee. He shall also see that the young people and the children of the church receive instruction in the Word of God.

- B. The pastor shall be hired by a three-quarter majority vote by active members present. The church may at any time by a three-quarter majority vote at a meeting called for that purpose and announced at least two Sundays in advance of the day request his resignation with the expectation that it will be presented within thirty days. On the other hand, the pastor shall give thirty days notice in case he wishes to leave on his own volition. In case of loss of ministerial standing or moral or doctrinal lapse, his relation with the church shall cease at once. At the time of resignation or termination of the pastor, all ties with the church are severed; this includes salary, membership and all other benefits. The only exception would be 30 days to vacate the parsonage. Any other exception to this amendment will be taken under advisement by the Deacon Board.
- C. Candidates for the office of pastor shall be chosen by a pastoral committee. This committee shall consist of an uneven number of people and no more than seven (7) to nine (9) members, appointed by the moderator. This committee shall consist of, one (1) deacon, one (1) trustee, one (1) person from each of the adult Sunday School classes, one (1) from the downstairs Sunday School, one (1) from the Senior High Sunday Class, one (1) person from the Mission Board, two (2) people from the church at large. One or two candidates will be heard then voted upon by the congregation for a majority vote; the candidate receiving the majority vote will then be voted upon for a three-quarter majority vote. If the vote is negative or fails to meet a three-quarter majority, other candidates will be sought and heard.
- D. In the absence of the pastor from the pulpit, other than sickness or vacation, the pastor shall supply the pulpit at his expense with the sanction of the Board of Deacons.
- E. The pastor shall have two weeks paid vacation per year. A total of fourteen (14) days which includes two Sundays; which is forfeited upon dismissal or resignation. Pastor should serve six (6) months to qualify for same.
- F. The pastor shall have no voting privileges unless a member of the church. If not a member, then he shall have the right to make recommendations but shall not make or second any motions.

Section 3 - Deacons

- A. The deacons shall be men of mature Christian character. They

should have a knowledge of the Bible, and be assured of their own acceptance with God through Jesus Christ. They should be men of responsibility in all matters, both secular and spiritual. They should have above average qualities of leadership such as sound judgment, dependability and the ability to guide others. They should be outstanding men of spirituality in the fellowship of the church.

- B. The Board of Deacons shall consist of no more than seven members.
- C. The deacons shall be nominated by the pastor and board of existing deacons. They shall be elected by a three-quarters majority of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting.
- D. The deacons who have been ordained to serve an indefinite period of time shall relinquish their status, one each year for five year rotation purposes. A deacon may replace himself if it is so desired by the Board of Deacons and church. These changes being made each year in January. They may resign of their own volition at any time. New deacons that fill vacancies of a resigning deacon's term can then be re-instated for a term of five (5) years.
- E. The deacons shall be responsible for the preparation of the ordinances, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, and shall assist the Pastor in the administration of the same.
- F. They shall co-operate with the Pastor in ministering to the spiritual interests of the church and community.
- G. The church shall remove a deacon from office, in like manner as any other officer, by majority vote upon the recommendation of the official board.

Section 4 - Deaconesses

- A. The Deaconesses shall be the wives of the deacons.
- B. The Deaconesses shall plan their own organization as their need may require. They shall be responsible for the preparation of the elements, they shall visit the sick, the needy, especially of their own sex, call upon new members, introduce new families into the life of the church, and co-operate with the Pastor in promoting the spiritual interests of the church. Joint meetings of deacons and deaconesses may be arranged as need may arise.

Section 5 - Trustees

- A. The Board of Trustees shall consist of three members, elected

for a term of three years in such manner that the term of one member shall expire annually. A quorum shall consist of two members. The board shall elect its own officers and committees and determine its own mode of procedure.

- B. It shall be the duty of the trustees to have the care and keeping of all real estate, securities and investments, and to make improvements upon the property as they deem advisable, with the consent of the church.
- C. Each trustee shall record their name, at the beginning of their term of office with the County Recorder of Montgomery County, Indiana as prescribed by law. Notice of election of a trustee shall be advertised two weeks prior to the election.

Section 6 - Moderator

The duties of the moderator shall be to familiarize himself with the Constitution and By-laws and all business activities of the church. He shall preside at all business meetings.

Section 7 - Clerk

The clerk shall keep record of all called or regular business meetings of the church and official board. He shall take care of church correspondence as requested. He shall keep a correct list of the membership of the church.

Section 8 - Treasurer

It shall be the duty of the treasurer of the church to receive all money, giving his receipt upon request, and to make disbursements of the same on order by the official board and the church. He shall make monthly reports to the church meetings.

Section 9 - Benevolence Treasurer

The benevolence treasurer shall receive and disburse all missionary money by order of the Mission Board.

Section 10 - Ushers

The ushers under the supervision of the Pastor, shall have charge of seating and making comfortable those who attend the services; shall be responsible for proper ventilating of the room; and shall pay special attention to strangers, making them welcome to the House of God.

ARTICLE IX

Official Board

Section 1

- A. The official board shall consist of the following officers of the church: Deacons, Trustees, Moderator, Clerk, Church Treasurer, Benevolence Treasurer, Sunday School Superintendents (Sr. and Jr.), and Pastor in an ex-officio capacity.
- B. The official board shall have a close supervision of all church needs and work. It shall consider business matters and make to the church such recommendations as seem wise. The church may refer to it such other matters as may not be so well attended to by a larger body. It shall wisely plan for the church and seek the co-operation of the church in its plans.
- C. The Official Board shall be the only governing body to ask for a resignation of any Church or Sunday School officers.

ARTICLE X

Departments and Societies

All departments and societies organized in the church such as the Sunday School, Youth Fellowship, Women's Fellowship, Classes, etc., shall be under the control of the church and shall make a report of their work when called for by the church.

ARTICLE XI

Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the church, or a special meeting called for that purpose, provided notice of such amendment has been given at a regular Sunday Worship Service at least 30 days prior to such regular or special business meeting, and providing further that such amendment shall be presented in writing.

ARTICLE XII

This Constitution and By-laws shall be in effect and binding upon the church when adopted by two-thirds majority vote and dated.

ARTICLE XIII

No part of the net earnings or other assets of this church shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, or officer of this church, or any private individual. No donor, member, individual, committee, associated or affiliated member or officer of this church shall be entitled to be a recipient in the

distribution of any of the assets of this church upon dissolution.

Any assets of said church must be distributed or given to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or education purposes.

BY-LAWS

1. Quorum: Ten (10) members shall constitute a quorum to transact business at a regular or called business meeting of the church. Six (6) members of the official board shall constitute a quorum of the official board.
2. Communion: The communion shall be served on the first Sunday of odd numbered months and as many other times as is deemed necessary.
3. Business Meeting: The church shall hold monthly business meetings. They shall be held on the first Monday night of the month. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor or the Official Board after announcement at a regular Sunday Worship service.
4. Organizations and Committees: The Sunday School and its classes, and all organizations of the church, shall be under the control of the church, and shall make reports of their activities at a business meeting. Any group may refer any matters to the Official Board of the church for advice or decision.
5. Gifts: Any gifts, legacies, or endowments shall be subject to a two-thirds vote of the church for acceptance at a duly called meeting.
6. Planning Committee: The planning committee consisting of pastor as chairman, and one representative of each of the above mentioned organizations shall meet in January to plan all church activities for the ensuing year.

AMENDMENTS

These By-laws may be amended at any regular business meeting or called meeting of the church, by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, providing notice of such amendment has been given in writing at a regular Sunday Worship service, one week before such regular or called meetings.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE
DARLINGTON CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

Amendments of Article I - Name

None

Amendments of Article II - Purpose of the Constitution

None

Amendments of Article III - Object

None

Amendments of Article IV - Policy

None

Amendments of Article V - Doctrine

Section 1, Paragraph A originally read:

This church adopts no doctrinal creed but the Bible. The Old Testament being fulfilled, modified, and explained in The New Testament.

Section 1, Paragraph A now reads as of December 1998:

This church believes that the Bible, both The Old and The New Testament, is the only true guide in faith and practice. The Old Testament is fulfilled, modified, and explained in The New Testament.

Amendments of Article VI - Covenant

None

Amendments of Article VII - Membership

Section 1 - Qualification - Add paragraph D. as of June 1971:

D. New members coming into the church will meet with the Board of Deacons and Pastor. They will be given a copy of the constitution and will go through it with the Board so they may understand the governing of the Darlington Congregational Christian Church.

Section 1 - Qualification - (Done Dec '98) 1st Sentence shall now read:

New members coming into the church will meet with the pastor and one or two members of the Board of Deacons.

Section 2, originally read:

Duties of members are as is expressed in Church Covenant.

Section 2, (Done Dec '98) shall now read:

Duties of members are as expressed in Church Covenant.

Section 4, paragraph A. - Add as of June 1971:

... and voting privilege cease.

Amendments of Article VIII - Officers

Section 1, paragraph A. - Add as of May 1995:

... pianist and assistant pianist.

Section 1, paragraph C. (Done Jan. '92) shall now read:

C. No one member of the congregation shall hold more than two elected offices in the church.

Section 1, paragraph D. (Done Nov.'78) shall now read:

D. The election of officers shall be held by ballot, except when there is only one nominee, he shall be elected by acclamation. All elections shall be determined by a majority of votes cast. The election of all officers shall be held at the December business meeting and taking office January 1.

Section 1, paragraph D. (Done May '95) shall now read:

D. The election of Moderator, Clerk, Church Treasurer, Organist, Assistant Organist, Benevolence Treasurer, Chorister, and Assistant Chorister shall be held at the December business meeting and taking office January 1.

Section 1, paragraph D. (Done Dec '98) shall now read:

D. The election of Moderator, Clerk, Church Treasurer, Organist, Assistant Organist, Benevolence Treasurer, Chorister, and Assistant Chorister, Pianist and Assistant Pianist shall be held at the December business meeting and taking office January 1.

Section 1, paragraph G. (Amendment date unknown) shall now read:

G. Officers of the church shall be nominated by a committee of three appointed by the moderator at the November business meeting. Nominations from the floor at the time

of the election are also allowed, except in the case of deacons, who are nominated only by the existing board of deacons and pastor.

Section 1, paragraph H. (Done in June 1971) shall now read:

H. A person shall be a member in good standing of the church for one year before they can hold any office listed below in the Church or Sunday School:

Church - Deacons, Trustees, Moderator, Clerk,
Treasurer, and Benevolence Treasurer.
Sunday School - Superintendents, Assistant Super-
intendents, Treasurer, and Secretary.
(See Amendment Article VIII, Section 1,
para. H.)

Section 2, paragraph B. (Done in May 2008) shall now read:

B. The pastor shall be hired by a three-quarter majority vote by active members present. The church may at any time by a three-quarter majority vote at a meeting called for that purpose and announced at least two Sundays in advance of the day, request his resignation with the expectation that it will be presented within thirty days. On the other hand, the pastor shall give thirty days notice in case he wishes to leave on his own volition. In case of loss of ministerial standing or moral or doctrinal lapse, his relation with the church shall cease at once. At the time of resignation or termination of the pastor, all ties with the church are severed; this includes salary, membership and all other benefits. The only exception would be 30 days to vacate the parsonage. Any other exception to this amendment will be taken under advisement by the Deacon Board.

Section 2, paragraph C. (Done in May 2008) shall now read:

C. Candidates for the office of pastor shall be chosen by a pastoral committee. This committee shall consist of an uneven number of people and no more than seven (7) to nine (9) members, appointed by the moderator. This committee shall consist of, one (1) deacon, one (1) trustee, one (1) person from each of the adult Sunday School classes, one (1) from the downstairs Sunday School, one (1) from the Senior High Sunday School Class, one (1) person from the Mission Board, two (2) people from the church at large. One or two candidates will be heard then voted upon by the congregation for a majority vote: the candidate receiving the majority vote will then be voted upon for a three-quarter majority vote. If the vote is

negative or fails to meet a three-quarter majority, other candidates will be sought and heard.

Section 2, paragraph D. (Done in June 1971)

D. In the absence of the pastor from the pulpit, other than sickness or vacation, the pastor shall supply the pulpit at his expense with the sanction of the Board of Deacons (See Amendment Article VIII, Section 2, para. D.)

Section 2 - Pastor, paragraph E. (Done April '84) shall now read:

E. The pastor shall have two weeks paid vacation per year. A total of fourteen (14) days which includes two Sundays; which is forfeited upon dismissal or resignation. Pastor should serve six (6) months before he is qualified for same.

Section 2, paragraph F. (Done in June 1971)

F. The pastor shall have no voting privileges unless a member of the church. If not a member, then he shall have the right to make recommendations but shall not make or second any motions.

Section 3 - Deacons - paragraph C. originally read:

The deacons shall be nominated by the pastor and board of existing deacons. They shall be elected by a three-quarters majority.

Section 3 - Deacons - paragraph C. (Done in Dec '98) shall now read:

The deacons shall be nominated by the pastor and board of existing deacons. They shall be elected by a three-quarters majority of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting.

Section 3 - Deacons - paragraph D. (Done in May 1995)

D. The deacons who have been ordained to serve an indefinite period of time shall relinquish their status, one each year for five (5) year rotation purposes. A deacon may replace himself if it is so desired by the Board of Deacons and congregation. These changes being made each year in January. They may resign of their own violation at any time. New deacons that fill vacancies of a resigning deacon's term can then be re-instated for a

term of five (5) years.

Section 3 - Deacons - paragraph D., 2nd sentence (Done in Dec '98) shall now read:

A deacon may replace himself if it is so desired by the Board of Deacons and the church.

Section 5 - Trustees - paragraph B originally read:

It shall be the duty of the trustees to have the care and keeping of all real estate, securities and investments, and to make improvements upon the property as they deem advisable, by the consent of the church.

Section 5 - Trustees - paragraph B (Done in Dec '98) shall now read:

It shall be the duty of the trustees to have the care and keeping of all real estate, securities and investments, and to make improvements upon the property as they deem advisable, with the consent of the church.

Amendments of Article IX - Official Board

Section 1, paragraph B. (Done in June 1971)

- B. The official board shall have a close supervision of all church needs and work. It shall consider business matters and make to the church such recommendations as seem wise. The church may refer to it such other matters as may not be so well attended to a larger body. It shall wisely plan for the church and seek the co-operation of the church in its plans.

Section 1, paragraph C. (Done in June 1971)

- C. The Official Board shall be the only governing body to ask for a resignation of any Church or Sunday School Officers.

Amendments of Article X - Departments and Societies

None

Amendments of Article XI - Amendments

None

Amendments of Article XII

None

Amendments of Article XIII

Added January 7, 1992:

No part of the net earnings or other assets of this church shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, or officer of this church, or any private individual. No donor, member, individual, committee, associated or affiliated member or officer of this church shall be entitled to be a recipient in the distribution of any of the assets of this church upon dissolution. Any assets of said church must be distributed or given to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or education purposes.

General - as of December 1998:

Deleted (See Amendment Article X, Section X, Paragraph X) anywhere it appears.

AMENDMENTS OF BY-LAWS

1. Quorum

None

2. Communion

Originally read:

Communion: The communion shall be served quarterly, and as many other times as is deemed necessary.

Reads as of December 1998:

Communion: The communion shall be served the first Sunday of odd numbered months and as many other times as is deemed necessary.

3. Business Meeting

3. Business Meeting: The church shall hold monthly business meetings. They shall be held on the first Monday night of the month. The Pastor shall be hired at the May meeting. Officers of the church elected at the August meeting. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor or the Official Board after announcement at a regular Sunday Worship Service.

Amended to in May 1995

3. Business Meeting: The church shall hold monthly business meetings. They shall be held on the first Monday night of the month. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor or the Official Board after announcement at a regular Sunday Worship Service.

4. Reports

Written reports shall be made at the August business meeting of the church by the officers of the church and all organizations and committees. These shall become the permanent property of the church, and from these the clerk shall summarize the work of the church and keep a permanent record. This By-Law was deleted in May '95 and paragraphs 5., 6., and 7. were changed to 4., 5., and 6.

5. Organizations and Committees

May 1995, changed number from 5. to 4.

6. **Gifts**

May 1995, changed number from 6. to 5.

7. **Planning Committee**

May 1995, changed number from 7. to 6.

General - as of December 1998:

Deleted (See Amendment Article X, Section X, Paragraph X)
anywhere it appears.