
CHRIST THE ANCHOR CHURCH PROTOCOLS

PREAMBLE

These protocols are meant to help the pastors, elders, deacons, members, and others associated with Christ the Anchor Church, cultivate a spirit of mutual submission as we serve one another in Christ Jesus. With this in view, these protocols are to be used as a source of wisdom to aid in service, and not as a source of bureaucratic entanglements. Nothing here is to be applied in a wooden or inflexible manner. These protocols describe how the elders will generally operate in certain specified situations. And this is what they will seek to do, unless obedience to the wisdom of Scripture requires otherwise.

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor” (Ephesians 5:2). Because Christians are called to love one another, these protocols are not to be used as a tool to manipulate others or to get one’s own way. These words are meant to help us lift one another up and to enhance one another’s ministries before God.

RELATION OF PROTOCOLS TO THE CHURCH CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of Christ the Anchor Church contains our covenanted procedural commitments, which cannot be altered except by constitutional amendment, or as the Constitution itself specifies. The Christ Church Elder protocols contain the far more specific information which we need to make particular decisions in wisdom, while at the same time containing far more detail than we want to be bound by constitutionally. These protocols may be modified by the elders at any time by simple majority decision.

MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

At Christ the Anchor church regular church attenders enjoy the benefits of community life and also naturally take on the duties associated with being a part of the community. Furthermore, baptized believers who are also regular attenders of the church have already met God’s requirements for membership into the body of Christ. In light of this our approach to membership for baptized believers is for all parties to acknowledge the duties and responsibilities already present by their participation in the in our common life.

After regular attendance for 2 months, or whenever it is apparent that the new attender is participating as though they are a part of our community one of our elders will have a brief discussion with them about what it means to be a part of our community and what membership entails and encourage them to make a formal acknowledgment of their membership before the body.

After they consent to membership, the church will receive their commitment to the body during the benediction portion of the service and commit to uphold them in the faith as a part of the body.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

When formal church discipline is necessary the process should be initiated with two or three visits or communications involving two or three witnesses, and clear records and/or minutes of the entire proceedings kept by the elders.

When the elders determine that a hearing is necessary, they will establish the specific procedures for each hearing on a case-by-case basis, as appropriate to the circumstances and individuals involved. These procedures should include informing the accused in writing of the specific charges, the time, place, and date of the hearing, and ample time for the accused to prepare a defense.

At the hearing, one of the elders will present a solemn charge from the Scriptures on the responsibilities of those present, the evidence against the accused will be presented, and the accused will have time to make a reasonable defense, including the right to question any witnesses.

At a separate meeting of the elders, a vote will be taken on each of the charges. A three-fourths majority is required for a guilty verdict. Upon securing a verdict and formulating pastoral direction for implementing the verdict, the elders will meet with all parties to the conflict and inform them of the verdict. If all parties submit to the verdict, the matter goes no further.

If one or more parties refuse to submit to the verdict, the elders will present the matter to the church and invite all the members of the church body to call the sinning believer to repentance (Matt. 18:17a, 2 Thess. 3:14-15). Sufficient time will be allowed for the members to communicate with the recalcitrant believer. If he will not hear the church body, then the elders will formally remove him from the fellowship of the church (Matt. 18:17b, 1 Cor. 5:4-5).

The elders will declare their verdict to the congregation on an appointed Lord's day, following an appropriate exhortation. The sinning member will be given a written copy of the verdict. The elders will establish an official file containing all the records pertaining to the hearing, including all pertinent correspondence, transcripts, and minutes. If he requests it, the accused will be given one copy of this file at the expense of the church.

A disfellowshipped member will be restored to full fellowship when a three-fourths majority vote of the elders finds that he has repented. A confession of this repentance will be read to the congregation on the Lord's Day, and the elders shall formally announce the end of the discipline and restoration of fellowship.

If another church has disciplined one of its members, and that person subsequently comes to our church, the elders will decide whether to honor the discipline of the other church after due consultation with the person concerned and after all appropriate information is sought from the disciplining church.

ELDERS BUSINESS MEETINGS

Business decisions can be made at any regular meeting of the elders (Wednesdays at 7:00am). Special elders meetings may be held at anytime provided that notice of time and location of the meeting is provided two weeks in advance. Decisions are made by simple majority unless otherwise specified in the constitution.

CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS

The elders will annually provide the church congregation with an update on the business of the church at a meeting scheduled at a convenient date, time, and location and noticed at least two weeks in advance. At this meeting, the elders shall present an update on the mission and ministry of the church, a financial report of the previous year and a plan for the coming year.