



## *Church Constitution*

### Preamble

If it pleases the Lord, we united in Christ, and specifically under the name of Rugged Cross, aim to live in the light of the Holy Scripture and in the guidance of the Holy Spirit as our convictions declare in this constitution.

### Article I - Name

This church shall be known as Rugged Cross. We are ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Body. It is an autonomous church with no other ruling body over it.

### Article II - Purpose

Heavenly Father, we thank You that we come before You having faith in Christ Jesus and loving one another. *(Col 1:3,4)* Father, it is our hope and prayer:

To be filled with the knowledge of You and ever searching the deep things of You through spiritual understanding. *(Col 1:9)*

To apply this knowledge in order to walk in a manner worthy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, to walk by faith in Him and to be pleasing to Him. *(Col 1:10)*

To seek and obtain Your strength for our perseverance in faith and holiness with joy, acknowledging only weakness in ourselves. *(Col 1:11)*

To magnify Your excellencies through our praise and worship of You who has made us able to share in the kingdom, the salvation and the glory that is our inheritance. *(Col 1:12)*



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To lovingly fellowship with one another in the kingdom of grace in complete submission to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ having been forgiven and redeemed in Him. *(Col 1:13)*

To humbly serve as members of the body, the church; seeking in diligent prayer the will of the Head, Christ. *(Col 1:18)*

To continue in the faith never turning from the one true Gospel and the hope that is found within. *(Col 1:23)*

To live, suffer and die, if necessary, for the increase of the church, the glory of Your Name and the furtherance of the Gospel. *(Col 1:24)*

Amen

### Article III - Statement of Faith

See: [Rugged Cross Statement of Faith\\_100124\\_Rev2.doc](#)

### Article IV – Issues Statement

#### On Homosexuality

We believe that marriage is a covenantal union between one man and one woman. Any human union emulating this covenant that does not consist of one man and one woman is an abomination before the Almighty God, as well as the sensual and sexual relations of two people of the same gender.

#### On Abortion

We believe that the intentional termination of the life of an unborn person is murder and wickedness before God.

#### On the Charismatic Movement

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Person of God who renews and dwells in every Christian and still administers gifts as He pleases to regenerate believers. These gifts are for the edification of the body of



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Christ and for the progress of the Gospel. The chief use of gifts for another reason is extra-biblical and not to be encouraged. Christians are not authenticated by the possession of any gifts nor does the presence of spectacular gifts mean a greater filling of the Spirit in any person. Extra-biblical gifts and experiences sought and obtained such as “holy laughter” and “slaying of the spirit” are the workings of another spirit and religion.

### On Christianity Among Other Religions

We believe that Christianity is the only true religion and that it was created by and established in the only true God. All other religions and spiritualities are an abomination.

### On Peace and War or Military Action and Taking Up Arms

If our country becomes involved in war, we shall endeavor to continue to live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; avoid joining in the wartime hysteria of hatred, revenge and retaliation; manifest a meek and submissive spirit, being obedient unto the laws and regulations of the government in all things, except in such cases where obedience to the government would cause us to violate the teachings of the Scriptures so that we could not maintain a clear conscience before God (Acts 5:29). We confess that our supreme allegiance is to God, and that we cannot violate this allegiance by any lesser loyalty, but rather must follow Christ in all things, no matter what it cost. We love and honor our country and desire to work constructively for its highest welfare as loyal and obedient citizens; at the same time, we are constrained by the love of Christ to love the people of all lands and races and to do them good as opportunity affords rather than evil, and we believe that this duty is not abrogated by war. We realize that to take this position may mean misunderstanding and even contempt from our fellowmen, as well as possible suffering, but we hope by the grace of God that we may be able to assume, as our forefathers did, the sacrifices and suffering which may attend the sincere practice of this way of life, without malice or ill-will toward those who may differ with us.

If once again conscription [the draft] should be established, we reserve the option that if service be required of us, it may not be under the military arm of the government, and may be such that we can perform it without violating our conscience, and that we may thus be permitted to continue to enjoy that full liberty of religious faith and conscience which



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has been our privilege hitherto. (A Statement of Our Position on Peace, War and Military Service (Mennonite Church, 1937), Our Attitude During Wartime\*)

### Article V - The Fellowship

The fellowship of this church includes all who are called brothers and sisters in Christ which find themselves in the assembly of Rugged Cross. Rugged Cross recognizes brothers and sisters as persons who are believers in Jesus Christ manifesting evidence of regeneration and having been baptized. And all those brothers and sisters in Christ who are attending Rugged Cross have full access to the privileges and benefits of Christian fellowship, as well as will be held to the responsibilities that come with Christian fellowship, as outlined below. Those who are in the congregation of this church must be willing to sit under the teachings of Scripture as expressed in this constitution, taking all disagreements and concerns regarding the contents of this constitution and the teachings of the church to the elders.

This church is to be governed under Christ by the elders, and thus the voting privileges of the fellowship are to be on administrative and temporal issues as well as on issues presented to the church by the elders. If at any time the body of elders is made up of less than 3 men, all issues, except appointment of officers (see Article VI) and amendments to the constitution (see Article VIII), are to be presented to the fellowship for voting. Individual members of the fellowship shall continually inquire about, learn about, pray about and input on the direction for this church in the service of God with the goal being the ability to, of clear conscience, fully support actions taken by this church for the furtherance of the Gospel. The role of properly handling and teaching of the Word of God is given to the elders. All church sanctioned studies led by fellowship members of Rugged Cross are to be done with teachings that are in agreement with teachings expressed in this constitution. Studies and study leaders are subject to oversight and approval by the elders. Unless approved by the elders, members of the fellowship and officers are to be those who serve in the ministries of the church.



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In accordance with Holy Scripture, as many as are purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ are to adhere to the following call to a God honoring life of Christian holiness and love. This is to uphold the covenant that has already been made between the believer and God in the submitting to His Word and is not dependent on commitments or covenants made with each other.

As a people of God, united with each other by the Blood of the Lamb, we are to rely on His grace to:

- seek a deeper knowledge and love of God
- desire the magnification of God's divine perfections and the exaltation of His Holy Name
- walk in Christian love through the power of the Holy Spirit
- not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but faithfully attend the church's meetings for worship, prayer, study, and fellowship, and use our spiritual gifts for the common good
- faithfully participate in the ordinances of the church
- endeavor after unity of mind in doctrine
- submit to the church's discipline upon ourselves and lovingly assume responsibility to participate in the discipline of other brothers and sisters in faith, as taught in Scripture
- contribute cheerfully and regularly to this church for its general ministry and expenses, the relief of the poor, the cause of reformation and revival, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations
- live as Christ in the world; and denying ungodliness and worldly lusts seek to fulfill our calling to lead a holy life and to be salt and light
- be just and honest in our dealings and faithful in our responsibilities and commitments
- abide by the standards of sexual purity, ethical integrity, and spiritual fidelity as taught in the Bible
- reject all heretical beliefs and practices, using Scripture as our final authority
- watch over one another in brotherly love, remember one another in prayer, help one another in sickness and distress, rejoice in each other's joy, sorrow in each other's struggles, bear one another's burdens, and cultivate Christian compassion and courtesy



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- practice personal and family worship, train our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord
- refrain from speech that does not build up and edify the Body of Christ such as gossip, slander, unsalted words, grumbling, godless and idle chatter and truth not spoken in love
- if, in the providence of God we leave this church, diligently seek to unite with another church where we can continue to carry out the spirit and principles of God's Word keeping in mind that the departure from this fellowship is a departure as if from family and should be treated as a weighty matter & done in love.

### Church Discipline

#### Purpose:

- to bring glory to God
- to restore and build up stumbling believers (Matt. 18:15, Gal. 6:1-2, Jam. 5:19-20)
- to produce and protect sound faith and doctrine (1 Tim. 1:19-20, Titus 1:10-13)
- to set an example and promote godly fear (1 Tim. 5:20)
- to protect the body of believers from sin (1 Cor. 5)
- to expel wicked and destructive people from the flock and bring unbelievers to faith (Rom. 16:17-18, Titus 3:9-11)

#### Reasons:

- disputes, troubles, and offences between believers (Matt. 18:15-17)
- people bringing destructive teachings or ways into the flock (Rom. 16:17-18, Titus 3:9-11)
- ongoing sin, especially immoral living that may spread to others (1 Cor. 5, 2 Thess. 3:10-15)
- false teachings (1 Tim. 1:20, 2 Tim. 2:17-18)

#### Manner:

- to be done by those who are spiritual (Gal. 6:1)
- to be done in gentleness, humility, love, patience (Gal. 6:1-2, 1 Thess. 5:14-15, 1 Tim. 5:1-2, 2 Tim. 4:2)
- to be done in truth, in accordance with Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17)



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- to be done on issues that call for discipline, and done after much prayer
- to be done out of concern for the person involved, guarding them against gossip

### Procedure:

- First
  - seek private reconciliation or restoration with offender (Matt. 5:22-24, 18:5)
  - if concerning an elder, have at least 2 or 3 witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19)
- Second
  - if that fails to bring repentance or reconciliation, bring witnesses before the person-preferably involving the eldership (Matt. 18:16-17)
- Third
  - if that fails, seek reconciliation or restoration led by the elders in taking the matter before the whole church (Matt. 18:17, 1 Tim. 5:20)
- Last Action
  - if that fails, the unrepentant offender shall be excommunicated and the church shall refuse fellowship with the person, inside and outside the assembly (1 Cor. 5, 2 Thess. 3:14) barring repentance.

## Article VI - Officers

The offices of this church shall be those of elders and deacons. Officers are to be examined by the elders in accordance with Scriptural qualifications and prayer. All officers are to be men called by God to these offices and possessing great love and affections for the Lord Jesus Christ. Likewise, they are to fully embrace the teachings of Holy Scripture as expressed in this constitution.

### Elders



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Under Christ, this church is to be governed by the elders who are to rule in service to Christ and His Church by Scripture and the Holy Spirit. An elder is a man called by the Lord our God to, and gifted by the Holy Spirit for, such a position, and is appointed there-in by elders. The specific service of each elder is to be determined amongst the elders in light of each one's calling and gifting. Direction for this church in the service of God and actions taken for the furtherance of the Gospel are not to be determined by vote, but rather by agreement within the eldership sought out in prayer, Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Input and support from the fellowship will be diligently sought by instructing, exhorting & edifying on all such matters in advance of actions taken with the goal being full support from an overwhelming majority of the fellowship.

The qualifications and conduct of elders are such as found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The duties of elders include:

- overseeing the ministries and resources of the church
- appointing officers
- administering proper discipline when appropriate
- being fully devoted to prayer and Scripture
- leading by example in speech, action, sacrificial service and pursuit of holiness
- properly handling and teaching the Word of God
- addressing error appropriately
- shepherding God's people who come into the fellowship of this church
- protecting the church from destructive persons and teachings
- administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper to those who are believed to be believers in Jesus Christ regenerated by the Holy Spirit
- overseeing the services of the deacons and congregation
- conducting worship services
- approving worship leaders
- overseeing the bringing in of guest teachers and preachers
- overseeing the making of a budget with the consultation of the deacons and congregation
- supervising congregation meetings
- appointing people to proper ministry and non-ministry positions when appropriate
- removing deacons and elders from their positions and servers from their service when needed



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An elder may resign or be removed from his position by the determination of the elders. Removal may be a result of church discipline, a continuing failure or inability to uphold the qualifications or duties of an elder, or if the elder has become in his position detrimental to the ministry of the Gospel, to the church or to himself.

### Deacons

Deacons are to be put forward by the elders to be voted on by the fellowship at any congregational meeting. Upon an obvious majority vote by the fellowship the elders would appoint the candidate to the office. A position is to be approved by the elders as well, either upon their seeing a need or after the request by the congregation. A deacon is as described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, and is to serve in accordance with their spiritual gifting. Deacons shall labor in the temporal and administrative services and needs of the church, and may appoint persons to aid in these ministries. The positions of clerk and treasurer are to be under the oversight of the elders and deacons.

- A clerk shall keep a record of the minutes of every congregation meeting as well as render reports as requested by the elders, deacons or the congregation.
- A treasurer shall not be an elder or paid staff member of the church. The treasurer is responsible for the handling of the finances of the church and providing and presenting financial reports to the officers and/or congregation. An accountability witness (preferably the clerk or deacon) shall accompany and verify the treasurer and his actions whenever he is accumulating, counting and recording incoming funds.

A deacon may resign or be removed from his position by the determination of the elders or by an obvious majority vote of the church at any congregation meeting. Removal may be a result of church discipline, a continuing failure to uphold the qualifications or duties of a deacon, or if the deacon has become detrimental to the ministry of the Gospel, to the church or to himself.

## Article VII – Congregation Meetings and Voting



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Meetings – discussions and votes – shall be done in love and truth and in striving to seek the common goal of the glory of God and building up of the Body of Christ. The role of individual and corporate prayer shall not be underestimated when considering congregation meetings and the seeking of the Lord’s guidance in voting on matters. The eldership is to oversee meetings and votes and shall approve the matters being voted on. Voting is to be done in an orderly and productive manner by those adult brothers and sisters in Christ who find themselves in the fellowship of Rugged Cross. When possible, meetings and matters being voted on should be announced to the congregation two weeks in advance.

Quarterly business meetings are to be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of January, April, July and October. Financial reports will be presented at all quarterly business meetings. An annual church budget will be presented for discussion and approval during December for the following calendar year.

### Article VIII - Amendments

Amendments made to this constitution are to be made by the church elders. Possible amendments may be brought to the elders by persons in the congregation, and prospective amendments shall be brought before the church at any congregation meeting for discussion prior to their final approval by the elders.

\* [A Statement of Our Position on Peace, War and Military Service \(Mennonite Church, 1937\)](https://anabaptistwiki.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=A_Statement_of_Our_Position_on_Peace,_War_and_Military_Service_(Mennonite_Church,_1937)), (Prepared by the Peace Problems Committee and adopted by the Mennonite General Conference at Turner, Oregon, August, 1937)  
[https://anabaptistwiki.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=A\\_Statement\\_of\\_Our\\_Position\\_on\\_Peace,\\_War\\_and\\_Military\\_Service\\_\(Mennonite\\_Church,\\_1937\)](https://anabaptistwiki.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=A_Statement_of_Our_Position_on_Peace,_War_and_Military_Service_(Mennonite_Church,_1937))  
(While we have borrowed and edited a portion of this Anabaptist statement for our own statement [On Peace and War or Military Actions and Taking Up Arms](#), we do not necessarily subscribe to the full Anabaptist statement in its entirety.)