



THE UPPER ROOM FELLOWSHIP Church Rules

We certify these to be the Church Rules adopted by the charity trustees of THE UPPER ROOM FELLOWSHIP at a meeting of the trustees held on2024

Trustee: Trustee:

As amended in accordance with the provisions of these Church Rules on:

Date of Revision	Signature of Trustee	Signature of Trustee
16/04/2024	Joe Sutton	Ray Kelly
03/12/2024	Joe Sutton	Ray Kelly

1. Introduction

The legal structure of our Church is a 'charitable incorporated organisation' (a "CIO"). We have a Church Constitution (the "Constitution") which deals with the legal requirements we have to meet as a CIO, including how the trustees of the CIO are appointed (the "Charity Trustees"). The Charity Trustees have certain legal duties and responsibilities under the law in England and Wales¹.

These Church Rules sit alongside our Constitution, and both documents should be read together to understand how the Church operates. The Church Rules set out additional information about the internal workings of our Church and are based on our understanding of the Bible. These Church Rules must always be consistent with our Constitution – if they are inconsistent, the Constitution takes precedence.

The Church was founded in order to:

- declare and make known the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- teach and expound the Christian Bible, applying its teachings to our community and context.
- form and cultivate a community of Christians, building them up in the historic evangelical faith.
- encourage and promote good works that are in accordance with the Christian faith.

2. Our Basis of Faith

Our Basis of Faith sets out the core truths of the Gospel which we believe every true Christian should agree with, and is included as an appendix to our Constitution (and so is not repeated here). Under our Constitution, the charitable purposes of our Church and the activities we carry out must be consistent with our Basis of Faith.

3. Doctrinal Distinctives

Our Church has another statement of beliefs called 'Doctrinal Distinctives'. These set out our Church's position and teaching on certain specific matters, as we recognise that genuine Christian believers may take different views. All Charity Trustees are required to agree with the Church's teaching on the Doctrinal Distinctives.

[Appendix A](#) contains our Doctrinal Distinctives.

4. Ethical Statements

These statements set out our Church's teaching on ethical matters and explain how our Basis of Faith is worked out practically in day-to-day life. All Charity Trustees are required to agree with the Church's teaching on, and to seek to live in accordance with, the Ethical Statements.

¹ These legal duties are explained in the Charity Commission's guidance [CC3 – The Essential Trustee](#).

[Appendix B](#) contains our Ethical Statements.

5. Leadership of our Church

- 5.1. Jesus Christ Himself is the leader of our Church. Through the Bible and the Holy Spirit, we are guided by Jesus' teaching – both by His words and the insight we are given into how He lived and treated people.
- 5.2. The Lord Jesus also gives us spiritual leaders, referred to in this local Church as Elders. As they themselves seek to follow Jesus they provide an example for others to follow, and the Bible encourages us to imitate the faith that they have. (Hebrews 13:7). The Constitution provides that the Elders in our Church will also be appointed as Charity Trustees, unless the Church Rules specify circumstances in which this is not required.
- 5.3. Individuals who are not Elders may also be appointed as Charity Trustees to ensure that the Charity Trustees collectively have the range of skills, experience and time needed to oversee the spiritual, financial, legal and practical aspects of the Church and to hold one another accountable. These individuals are referred to as Non-Elder Trustees within our Church.

6. Elders

- 6.1. The Elders are responsible for the spiritual and pastoral oversight of our Church. Elders are men whom the Holy Spirit has qualified to serve in this role, and who demonstrate the gifting, character and conduct described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:2-3. This includes agreement with the Basis of Faith and seeking to live in accordance with the Ethical Statements of the Church. Elders should also be in agreement with its Doctrinal Distinctives.
- 6.2. The expectations for Elders, including their personal conduct and their conduct towards others in the Church, are presented in the Church's Covenant.
- 6.3. Elders are appointed or reappointed by the other Elders. 75% of Elders present and eligible to vote must vote in favour for the individual to be appointed.
- 6.3. An Elder will serve for a term of 5 years and may then be re-appointed, apart from a remunerated Pastor (who will remain in office as an Elder for so long as they are the Pastor).
- 6.4. The Church may appoint a Pastor or Pastors, who are set apart for the teaching and preaching of the Bible and the pastoral leadership of our Church. A Pastor is an Elder of our Church and references in the Constitution and Church Rules to Elders include the Pastor(s).

- 6.5. If a Pastor is to be remunerated in accordance with the Constitution, he may either be an employee of the Church with a contract of employment or a paid office holder of the Church with a memorandum of understanding.
- 6.6. An Elder may resign from office by giving notice in writing to the Charity Trustees and, in the case of a remunerated Pastor, in accordance with his contract of employment or memorandum of understanding, as appropriate. Upon his resignation from this office, the Elder shall also automatically cease to hold office as a Charity Trustee, unless separately appointed to act as a Non-Elder Trustee in accordance with the Constitution and these Church Rules.
- 6.7. If an Elder ceases (in the opinion of the majority of Charity Trustees) to believe in the doctrines contained in the Basis of Faith, Ethical Statements or Doctrinal Distinctives or no longer displays the qualities or behaviour required of an Elder, then the Charity Trustees may resolve that the appointment of the Elder be terminated (subject also to the requirements of employment law and the Constitution, as applicable). 75% of Charity Trustees present and eligible to vote must vote in favour in order for the decision to be carried, and the Elder in question shall be given reasonable opportunity to make representations to the Charity Trustees prior to the decision to terminate his office being taken. For the avoidance of doubt, in the event that the appointment of an Elder is terminated in this way, the Elder shall also automatically cease to hold office as a Charity Trustee.
- 6.8. An Elder will usually Chair meetings of Elders and Charity Trustees,² provided he does not have a conflict of interest in an item to be discussed.³
- 6.9. In accordance with clause 14 of the Constitution, the Charity Trustees can delegate responsibility for some matters. Wherever these Church Rules refer to the Elders having responsibility for specific decisions, it is because the Charity Trustees have delegated that responsibility to them as it relates to a matter of spiritual authority. The delegation of responsibility by the Charity Trustees may be reviewed by them from time to time.

7. Non-Elder Trustees

² You should select the wording that is appropriate to your church's context. In some churches the Pastor will chair Elders/Charity Trustee meetings. In other churches, these meetings will be chaired by another Elder or Charity Trustee. Alternatively, if there are Elders who meet separately from a wider group of Charity Trustees then the Pastor may chair Elders meetings while another individual chairs Charity Trustee meetings. There are two aspects to consider here: 1. a pastoral concern for the Pastor: if someone else is a focal point for chairing meetings and liaising with the Pastor on agenda items this can provide greater pastoral and practical support for the Pastor; 2. A governance point: if others are involved in chairing meetings it may be easier for the Pastor to demonstrate accountability to the church and for Charity Trustees and/or Church Members to share ideas or questions. On this point, it may be helpful to compare the situation to a Chair and CEO in a charity, where the CEO is responsible for the day to day management of the charity but is held to account by the Charity Trustees, through the Chair.

³ If the person chairing the meeting has declared an interest in an agenda item which gives rise to a conflict of interest, then they should leave the meeting for that item and someone else will need to chair that part of the meeting.

- 7.4. The Non-Elder Trustees have key leadership responsibilities for both the practical affairs and regular activities of our Church. These include areas of administration, finance, care and outreach as well as oversight of the Church alongside the Elders. Non-Elder Trustees are individuals whom the Holy Spirit has qualified to serve in this role, and who demonstrate the gifting, character and conduct described in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. This includes agreement with the Basis of Faith and seeking to live in accordance with the Ethical Statements of the Church. Non-Elder Trustees should also be in agreement with its Doctrinal Distinctives.
- 7.6. For the avoidance of doubt, Non-Elder Trustees must be in regular fellowship of this Church in order to be appointed.
- 7.7. Non-Elder Trustees are appointed by the Charity Trustees. 75% of Charity Trustees present and eligible to vote must vote in favour for the individual to be appointed as a Non-Elder Trustee.
- 7.8. A Non-Elder Trustee will serve for a term of 3 years and may be re-elected.
- 7.9. A Non-Elder Trustee may resign from office by giving notice in writing to the Charity Trustees. For the avoidance of doubt, upon his resignation as a Non-Elder Trustee, the Non-Elder Trustee shall also automatically cease to hold office as a Charity Trustee.
- 7.10. If a Non-Elder Trustee ceases (in the opinion of the majority of Charity Trustees) to believe in the doctrines contained in the Basis of Faith, Ethical Statements or Doctrinal Distinctives, or no longer displays the qualities or behaviour required of a Non-Elder Trustee, then the Charity Trustees may resolve that the appointment of the Non-Elder Trustee be terminated (subject also to the requirements of the Constitution). 75% of Charity Trustees present and eligible to vote must vote in favour in order for the decision to be carried, and the Non-Elder Trustee in question shall be given reasonable opportunity to make representations to the Charity Trustees prior to the decision to terminate their office being taken. For the avoidance of doubt, in the event that the appointment of a Non-Elder Trustee is terminated in this way, the Non-Elder Trustee shall automatically cease to hold office as a Charity Trustee.

8. Other Church Officers

- 8.1. The Charity Trustees may appoint individuals from among the attendees of the Church to Church Officer roles within the Church, but they shall not be Charity Trustees unless appointed as such in accordance with the Church Rules and the Constitution.
- 8.2. In accordance with clause 14 of the Constitution, the Charity Trustees may delegate responsibility for practical, administrative and other tasks to these Church Officers, who shall act on the instructions of the Charity Trustees, but the Charity Trustees will remain responsible for the oversight and governance of the Church.

- 8.3. When appointing individuals to such Church Officer roles, the Charity Trustees may specify the qualifications and terms of appointment (including termination of appointment) and any such other conditions of appointment as they think fit.
- 8.4. For the avoidance of doubt, if the Charity Trustees do not appoint Church Officers in accordance with this paragraph 8, any particular duties specified will be managed by the Charity Trustees together.

8.5 Deacons

- 8.5.1 Deacons are appointed in line with Acts Chapter 6 verse 3.
- 8.5.2 The role of Deacon is ultimately defined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons will be people of good reputation who have a desire to serve the Church.

8.6 Ministry Leaders

- 8.6.1. Ministry leaders are appointed as necessary to lead specific areas of ministry including, but not limited to, children's ministry, youth ministry, hospitality etc.
- 8.6.2 Ministry Leaders will be people of good reputation who have a desire to serve the Church.

8.7 Church Secretary

The Church Secretary manages the administration and 'corporate' governance of our Church, although overall responsibility and oversight remains with the Charity Trustees. This includes the arrangements for meetings of the Elders and Charity Trustees (including sending agendas and papers, and taking minutes), making sure that the provisions of the Constitution and the Church Rules are followed, managing the documentation relating to employment of staff and/or paid office holders and ensuring that the Church's entry on the Register of Charities is kept to date. The Church Secretary also maintains the register of members, which we must do under the terms of our Constitution.

8.8 Church Treasurer

The Charity Trustees are responsible for the financial oversight and governance of the Church. They will delegate responsibility for financial administration to the Church Treasurer, but shall ensure that a clear financial policy and the appropriate financial controls are in place. The Church Treasurer will, amongst other things, maintain the accounts of the Church and supporting records and provide financial reports to the Charity Trustees to ensure that the Charity Trustees are able to maintain financial oversight.

9 Communicating with others in the Church

- 9.1 Under our Constitution, the Charity Trustees are the only legal members of the Church as a CIO. Where the Constitution refers to 'the members of the Church' this will be the

same people as the charity trustees (from time to time). However, the Charity Trustees recognise the importance of communicating and consulting with others in the Church, particularly those who regularly attend and are actively engaged in the Church, including in service to others. Such individuals may be informally referred to as “members,” but for the sake of clarity in this document they shall be referred to as Associate Members.

9.2 Therefore, whilst it is not a legal requirement for attendees or members of the congregation to formally vote on decisions, the Charity Trustees will regularly communicate with Associate Members about decisions that have been made and future plans, including to consult on key issues and seek input from others before decisions are finalised. This is likely to include:

- The proposed appointment of Elders and Non-Elder Trustees.
- Significant decisions about the spiritual direction, activities and practical affairs of the Church.
- To buy or sell land or buildings or to undertake substantial building work.
- To set up a church plant, change the legal structure of the Church or to merge with another Church.
- To make amendments to the Constitution that would require the Charity Commission’s consent, to amend the Basis of Faith, Doctrinal Distinctives, Ethical Statements in the Constitution and/or Church Rules, or to amend the Church Rules (other than minor administrative amendments).

9.3 Section 10 details the process by which someone may become an Associate Member of the Church.

10 Membership of the Church

The Church operates a formal membership system to recognise those who have freely chosen to call The Upper Room Fellowship their “home church.” In accordance with Clause 9.1 these individuals are denoted Associate Members in this document, though informally may be referred to as “members.”

The benefits and expectations that correspond to membership of the Church are defined in the Church Covenant document.

10.1 Becoming an Associate Member

10.1.1 Membership of the Church is not inferred from regular attendance or any other means. It is requested by the prospective member, although this may be in response to an Elder approaching and suggesting it.

10.1.2 The process of becoming an Associate Member is initiated by the prospective Associate Member contacting the Pastor or an Elder of the Church.

10.1.3 Typically, prospective Associate Members will then be met by one or more of the Elders for an informal conversation. The Elders are looking for evidence, so far as they are able to discern, that the prospective Associate Member is a genuine Christian, sincere in his or her desire to join the Church.

10.1.4 To be eligible for membership, prospective Associate Members must:

- Affirm the Statement of Faith and other aspects of the Church Constitution, including the Church Rules.
- Have partaken in a believer's baptism. This may have been at a previous church or fellowship.
- Agree to be bound by the Church Policies and Procedures as defined in Appendix C.

It is not necessary for prospective Associate Members to fully affirm the Doctrinal Distinctives, but Associate Members agree not to teach divisive views.

10.1.5 Associate Members agree to share Personally Identifiable Information (PII) so that the Church can effectively minister to them. Such PII will be stored securely in the Church database in accordance with the Privacy Policy. The details collected will include, minimally:

- Full name
- Address
- Contact details (phone number and/or email address)

10.1.6 Associate Members are invited to join the church WhatsApp Community, the church database via the iKnow App, and to register for Gift Aid.

10.1.7 Associate Membership is formally confirmed at the regular monthly Leadership Meetings. Once this has been ratified, we will confirm this to the new member.

10.2 Terminating Membership of the Church

10.2.1 Associate Members who wish to leave the Church for any reason are invited to meet with the Elders to discuss it. The Elders will wish to understand the reasons for leaving and to pray with them before they depart.

10.2.2 Associate Membership of the Church is generally ongoing and does not expire or need to be renewed. However, membership may be terminated if any of the following are true:

- The Associate Member has prolonged, unexplained non-attendance of the Church,

- The Associate Member has violated or refuses to abide by some aspect of the Church Rules or Covenant,
- The Associate Member has committed gross misconduct or criminal conduct,
- If any of the criteria for joining in section 10.1.4 cease to be true.

10.2.3 If deemed necessary by the Elders, terminations will be announced to the Church members, including any appropriate reasons behind the termination.

11 Other provisions relating to the day to day running of the Church⁴

[Appendix C](#) covers other matters relevant to how we run our Church on a day to day basis, that are not covered anywhere else in these Church Rules. At present this includes the Church safeguarding policy, but other policies may be added by the Charity Trustees from time to time.

12 Changing these Church Rules

12.1 These Church Rules can be changed if the proposed amendment is approved by the Charity Trustees at a duly convened meeting or by a written resolution passed in accordance with the Constitution. This is provided the proposed amendment would not cause the Church to lose its charitable status or make the Church Rules inconsistent with the Constitution.

12.2 A majority of 75% of Charity Trustees is needed to approve an amendment to the Church Rules.

12.3 Any changes to our Constitution must be made in accordance with clause 27 of the Constitution.

⁴ This section is optional but provides a space for you to include other useful information relevant to the operations of the church and/or how it administers matters not covered in other parts of the Rules. We have included some topics you may wish to include but this is not compulsory and you may have other things you wish to add. For simplicity, we have included practicalities relating to the Lord's Supper and Baptism under 'Doctrinal Distinctives' but these could be included in this section (or this section could be removed entirely).

Appendix A – Doctrinal Distinctives

Baptism

Baptism is a command of the Lord Jesus Christ to all those who believe in Him (Matthew 28:19). This Church teaches, preaches and practises believers' baptism. The normal mode of baptism is full immersion in water, but if appropriate, an alternative approach may be agreed.

Anyone interested in being baptised should first speak to one of the Elders. The decision whether to baptise an individual will be taken by the Elders.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper (or Communion) is a symbolic meal of thanksgiving established by the Lord Jesus in which we:

- Regularly remember His atoning work on the cross
- Acknowledge our sharing in the benefits of His death
- Have fellowship with the Lord Jesus and each other
- Are reminded of His love for us, which is to guide our relationships as the body of Christ
- Proclaim His death until His return.

The Lord's Supper is normally celebrated once a month at the Sunday morning service. All who truly believe in the Lord Jesus and know Him as their personal Saviour are encouraged to take part.

Marriage

Our Basis of Faith sets out that the Bible is the final authority for all matters of belief and practice. The Church upholds that the teaching of the Bible is that marriage is between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Ephesians 5:31-33) and that all sexual practices outside of marriage between a man and a woman are sinful and wrong. This includes homosexual practices (Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) regardless of whether or not homosexual marriage is permitted by the laws of England and Wales.

As a member of the FIEC, this Church holds to the Doctrinal Distinctives on Same-Sex Marriage adopted by the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC) on this issue. This is available on the FIEC website (<https://fiec.org.uk/who-we-are/beliefs/same-sex-marriage>).

Women in Ministry

This Church's position is that men and women have different but complementary roles and responsibilities in marriage, family life, church leadership, and elsewhere. The Bible teaches

that although women are precluded from certain roles and ministries within the church, they are of equal status to men and have other important ministries.

This Church holds to the Doctrinal Distinctives on Women in Ministry adopted by (FIEC) in their Statement on this issue. This is available on the FIEC website (<https://fiec.org.uk/who-we-are/beliefs/women-in-ministry>).

Gospel Unity

As a member of the FIEC, this Church holds to the Doctrinal Distinctives on Gospel Unity adopted by the FIEC in their Statement on this issue. This is available on the FIEC website (<https://fiec.org.uk/who-we-are/beliefs/gospel-unity>).

Soteriology

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. We believe that all human beings can be saved when, of their own free will, they believe in and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation, having recognised their own sinful state and their need for a saviour. We further believe that those people that are saved are predestined to the benefits of salvation because of God's foreknowledge of their faith.

Appendix B – Ethical Statements⁵

Marriage

In line with our Doctrinal Distinctives, it is important that the Church and Church members in no way condone, promote, assist or encourage adulterous or extra-marital sexual practices, whether heterosexual or homosexual.

Gender

In accordance with our Doctrinal Distinctives and the FIEC Statement on Women in Ministry, we recognise that God created us male and female and calls us to live according to our gender identity, which is inseparable from our biological sex determined at conception. Our gender may not be changed or reassigned.

Racism

We believe that there is only one race – the human race – and within that all people are equally valuable in the sight of God. We therefore do not espouse teach or tolerate racist views.

⁵ It is useful to have statements on ethical matters in areas where the ethical standards of the Bible differ considerably from the ethical requirements of the society around us, both to be of help to church members and also so that the church can demonstrate that its stance on those issues flows from the church's Basis of Faith rather than simply representing the opinions of the current church leadership team. Ethical Statements will cover matters that flow from the statements in the church's Basis of Faith rather than being matters to be included in the Basis of Faith itself. As explained above, Doctrinal Distinctives cover matters that represent the formal teaching of the church but over which members are free to disagree. Therefore, the Doctrinal Distinctives are not the appropriate place to cover ethical matters because members may be subject to church discipline if they do not live their lives in accordance with Biblical ethics. Therefore, we have included in the template a separate section dealing with Ethical Statements together with some examples.

Appendix C – Other provisions relating to the day to day running of our Church⁶

Church safeguarding and other policies

The Charity Trustees shall operate a Church safeguarding policy⁷ and shall ensure that activities involving children and vulnerable adults are carried out in accordance with that policy. A copy of the Church's safeguarding policy is available on the church website, or from any of the Charity Trustees.

Each person overseeing Church activities involving children or vulnerable adults and every Charity Trustee shall provide to the Charity Trustees a current Disclosure and Barring Service certificate.

Church Membership Covenant

Associate Members of the Church agree to the principles described in the Membership Covenant document, which is published on the church website here:

<https://theupperroomfellowship.church/document>

This document describes the expectations that we believe the Bible calls us to have from one another.

⁶ This appendix is optional but provides space for other provisions not covered elsewhere in the Rules. We have included some example wording but this can be amended depending on what you would like to include.

⁷ Every church needs to have a safeguarding policy and a copy of this will need to be submitted to the Charity Commission as part of the CIO registration application. Please note that the wording here is not the safeguarding policy itself but a requirement for the church to operate a policy. We would not recommend including copies of policies within the Rules themselves, so that they are not bound by the provisions relating to amendments to the Rules set out in Appendix I, unless the Rules clearly state that the policies themselves do not form part of the Rules and may be updated by the Charity Trustees from time to time.