

CALVARY CHURCH

Proposed Constitutional Updates

The below is intended to be a summary of the requested changes to the Constitution as approved by the elders (please review the blackline version of the Constitution included in this handout).

Marriage Defined

In the summer of 2015, the U.S. supreme court ruled that states must grant same sex marriages and recognize same sex marriages granted in other states. As a result of this ruling, churches that did not want to perform such weddings were suddenly at risk of being sued by same sex couples that were denied these services. However, there is well established exemption for issues like this if the denial is based on sincerely held religious beliefs. But in order to be assured of being granted such an exemption, legal experts recommended that churches should formally document the basis for their beliefs in written church policies and other related materials. Following that advice, the elders have included a new paragraph in the proposed constitution defining marriage as being between one man and one woman, and adopted some new policies regarding facility use.

This change is found in Article III, Section C of the Constitution.

Women Serving as Deacons

Calvary Church has been discussing the possibility of women serving in the role of deacon since 1990. During the Romans sermon series in 2016, Jim Samra preached on Romans 16:1 stating that Phoebe was recognized by Paul as a deacon. The Elder Board at that time brought this topic back onto the agenda to pray, fast and seek God's leading. Eighteen months later the elders voted unanimously to continue this conversation with the congregation along with the recommendation of revising the Constitution to allow women to serve in the role of deacon. Calvary's website offers several helpful resources including a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs). These resources can be used to help members study and pray through this important issue, which requires a change to the Constitution prior to implementation. Visit calvarygr.org/womenasdeacons for this information.

This change is found in Article V, Sections C, D and E of the Constitution.

Moving the Annual Meeting to October and the start of the Elder & Deacon terms to January

This change is a ripple effect of moving the church's fiscal year, to start September 1 (which was done in the 2014/2015 fiscal year). As a result, the Treasurer's Report during the Annual Meeting is currently providing only estimated year-end financials because the books for the year just ended are still several weeks from being finalized. Moving the Annual Meeting one month later, to the last half of October each year, will allow the Treasurer to present finalized numbers. This solution does create another ripple effect, however, in that there would only be six weeks before the incoming Elders and Deacons begin their terms. Moving the start of their terms (along with the selection of officers (i.e. Elder Chair), etc.) from December to January allows for this transition and related cross-training to happen more smoothly.

This change is found in Article V, Sections A, C, E and G of the Constitution.
