



By-Laws
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Ponca City, Oklahoma



Article I. Church Year

The Church fiscal year shall start on January 1 of each year. The Church program year will follow the liturgical year.

Article II. General Organization Entities

1. The Congregation is the ultimate governing body of the Church. (Article III).
2. The Elders are the spiritual leaders of the Church. (Article IV.)
3. The Deacons are the serving leaders of the Church. (Article V.)
4. The Council will act for the Congregation as specified in these By-Laws.
5. At the Annual Meeting, the Congregation shall act on the recommendations of the Nominating Committee to fill the Congregational offices of Moderator, First Vice Moderator, Second Vice Moderator, Treasurer, two Assistant Treasurers, Secretary and Cashier for the coming year commencing January 1. Further, at the Annual Meeting, the Congregation shall act on the recommendations of the Nominating Committee to fill vacant positions on the Council, Trustees, Elders and Deacons.

Article III. Congregation Officers and Meetings

1. The Moderator shall call and preside at all regular and special meetings of the Congregation.
2. The First Vice Moderator shall, in the absence of the Moderator, perform all the duties of the office of Moderator. The Second Vice Moderator shall, in the absence of the Moderator and First Vice Moderator, perform all the duties of the office of Moderator.
3. The Secretary shall record transactions and take minutes for all meetings of the Congregation and perform such other duties as may be assigned.

4. The Treasurer shall have authority to approve and disburse all funds of the Church as designated by the Council and Congregation.
5. The Assistant Treasurer and the Second Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer in the performance of duties, including the disbursement of funds.
6. The Cashier shall arrange for and supervise the counting and depositing of all regular and special offerings of the Church.
7. The Historian shall be appointed by the Council to serve for a period of one year and may be appointed for successive terms. The Historian shall gather and preserve data pertaining to the history, life and work of the Church, shall make available for publication any historical materials authorized by the Church, and shall present an annual historical statement to the Council.
8. An annual meeting of the Congregation (the “Annual Meeting”) shall be held each November for the purpose of filling Church elective positions and approving the annual operating budget for the coming year.
9. Special Congregational meetings shall be called by a majority vote of the Council. Special Congregational meetings must be called with at least two (2) weeks’ notice being given in the Sunday Service Program for church services and with at least one notice being published in the Church newsletter not less than 14 days prior to the meeting. Courtesy announcements shall also be made in Sunday worship services and general Congregational emails. Such notices shall detail the time, location and subject matter of the Congregational meeting which shall be held immediately after the Sunday worship service which has the largest attendance of Congregational members. No action shall be taken on subject matter not specified in the published notice, except in cases of emergency. The Council may take action on emergency items, but the actions shall only stand until confirmed by the Congregation at a Special Congregational meeting held at the earliest possible opportunity considering the notice requirements of this paragraph.

10. The Congregation must approve all major unbudgeted items and all major capital expenditures. "Major" is defined as 5% or more of the annual operating budget.
11. Petitioned Congregational meetings shall be called upon the Council's receiving a petition signed by thirty-five (35) church members requesting a Special Congregational meeting and specifying the topic of the meeting. The Moderator shall call a Special Congregational meeting immediately after the earliest possible Sunday worship service, considering notice requirements set forth in section 9 above. Said meeting shall be held for the purpose of taking action upon the matter specified in the petition.

Article IV. Elders

1. Elders shall be the spiritual leaders of the Church and, with the Clergy Staff, shall provide the pastoral care of the Congregation.
2. The number of serving Elders will be established by the Council to fulfill the current needs of the Church.
3. Elders shall serve one-year terms commencing in January of each year and shall serve not more than three (3) consecutive terms in a four-year period.
4. Elders shall promote the growth and welfare of the Church, give spiritual oversight to the members with respect to regular attendance at the Lord's Supper, provide care for the sick, exhibit concern for all God's people, encourage by example the mission of the Church, and serve at the Lord's Table.
5. The Coordinator of the Elders will be appointed by the Council.

Article V. Deacons

1. Deacons, in cooperation with the Elders, shall promote the growth and welfare of the Church.
2. The number of serving Deacons will be established by the Council to fulfill the current needs of the Church.
3. Deacons shall serve one-year terms commencing in January of each year and shall serve not more than three (3) consecutive terms in a four-year period.

4. Deacons shall assist in the greeting and ushering of the worshipers, prepare and care for communion tables and emblems, distribute the Lord's Supper, receive the offerings, assist with visitation projects, and assist the Clergy and the Elders in carrying out the pastoral ministry of the Church.
5. The Coordinator of the Deacons will be appointed by the Council.

Article VI. Council

1. The Council shall administer the affairs of the Church and shall exercise all powers of the Congregation not reserved to the Congregation by these By-Laws.
2. The Council shall consist of eight (8) members. The Congregation Moderator, First Vice Moderator, Second Vice Moderator and Treasurer shall be members, along with four other Council members elected by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting. Council members shall serve staggered two-year terms so that four (4) will have terms that expire each year. Council members may not serve consecutive terms.
3. Executive officers of the Council shall be the Moderator, First Vice Moderator, Second Vice Moderator and Treasurer, and they shall perform the same executory functions for the Council that they perform as Congregational officers. Annually, the Nominating Committee shall propose and recommend to the Congregation a slate of candidates to fill the executive officer positions as well as the balance of Council positions. Council members shall be approved by a majority vote of the Congregation present at the Annual Meeting.
4. The Council shall be responsible for creating, maintaining and organizing the written administrative procedures and policies of the Church.
5. The Council shall meet as often as it deems necessary, but shall hold at least one publicized evening meeting per month. In January of each year the Council shall establish the time and date of the monthly publicized meetings which it will hold during that year and publish this list in the church newsletter. The church secretary shall provide to any member the date, time and place of

all upcoming monthly Council meetings and any unpublished meetings which have been called. Council meetings are open to the Congregation. Any member of the Congregation may attend any Council meeting.

6. The Council shall meet with the Congregation at least quarterly on an informal basis to communicate concerning current issues of the Church. At least one written "State of the Church" message shall be provided by the Council to the Congregation by October of each year.
7. Five members of the Council shall constitute a quorum at any Council meeting.

Article VII. Duties of Council Officers

1. The Moderator shall perform the usual duties of such office, and shall call and preside at all Council meetings.
2. The First Vice Moderator shall, in the absence of the Moderator, perform all the duties of the office of Moderator. The Second Vice Moderator will be the Facilitator of the Personnel Committee and, in the absence of the Moderator and First Vice Moderator, shall perform all the duties of the office of Moderator.
3. Any secretarial function will be designated at the discretion of the Council, but minutes shall be kept of the actions taken at the monthly evening meetings and a summary of major matters from any meeting shall be published in the church newsletter.
4. The Financial Steward, appointed by the Council from among its members, shall oversee the preparation and funding of the annual operating budget and advise the Council on all pertinent financial matters.
5. The Treasurer will be a member of the Council.
6. For the execution of legal documents, the Moderator shall be titled President, the Vice Moderators shall be titled Vice President and the Treasurer shall be titled Secretary. In such designations, these persons shall have the full power and authority of their respective titled positions to execute contracts, convey property or otherwise engage in the executive functions recognized by law for persons in such positions.

Article VIII. Church Personnel

1. The Clergy Staff of the Church shall be ordained and have standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
2. The Pastor of the Church shall perform the duties which pertain to the office and, as spiritual administrator of the Church, shall be an ex-officio non-voting member of all organized groups, auxiliaries and committees.
3. All Clergy Staff and all salaried employees of the Church shall be under the administration of the Pastor in the performance of their duties as defined and outlined in the job description of each employee.
4. When a member of the Clergy Staff is to be selected, the Moderator will appoint a Search Committee representative of the diverse life of the Congregation. This committee shall bring recommendations to the Elders and the Council, which will then take its recommendation to the Congregation. A favorable two-thirds vote of the Congregation present and voting shall be required to select the member of the Clergy Staff.
5. A written statement of the salary to be paid and other conditions of the call shall be drawn in duplicate, one copy for the Clergy Staff member and one for the Church.
6. The term of each Clergy Staff member shall be for an indefinite period, but may be terminated by either a majority vote of the Congregation or by the Clergy Staff member upon 60 days' written notice.
7. The Personnel Committee shall recommend to the Council the employment or termination of other persons necessary for the successful operation of the Church.

Article IX. Organization

1. The organization of the Church is a dual ministry concept within the Council of ***Action Ministries*** (spiritual/missions) and ***Enabling Ministries*** (administrative).
2. There will be no head of the ***Action Ministries*** and ***Enabling Ministries*** unless appointed by the Council.
3. All affiliated organizations will be under the auspices of the Council.

Article X. Action Ministries

1. ***Action Ministries*** do the work of the Church. Organization of these ministries is flexible in order to meet the needs of the Church and Community at any point in time. The Action Ministries will be defined by the Council and leadership as determined. For example, organization around mission: Seeking, Serving, Sharing; liturgical calendar: Easter, Advent, Pentecost, etc.; classic: worship, missions, etc.
2. Action Ministries will be organized by Special Ministry Teams as deemed necessary by the Council.

Article XI. Enabling Ministries

1. ***Enabling Ministries*** care for the resources of the Church and nurture those resources to give means to the work of the Church. The ***Enabling Ministries'*** Standing Ministry Teams will be Financial Resources, Personnel Resources, Permanent Fund & Memorial Fund Trustees, Audit Committee and Pastoral Relations Committees. Standing Ministry Teams will be subject to policies set by the Council.
2. The Council will select the Facilitators of all Standing Ministry Teams. The Facilitator of the Financial Resources Ministry Team is the Financial Steward. The Facilitator of the Personnel Committee is the Second Vice Moderator.
3. Membership on each Standing Ministry Team will be on the basis of interest and qualifications for that Ministry.
4. The number of members of Standing Ministry Teams will be determined by these By-Laws or set by the Council.
5. Ministry Teams and committee Facilitators will not serve for more than two consecutive years unless deemed a critical immediate need for the Church.
6. Each Standing Ministry Team shall organize itself to accomplish the Ministry for which it is responsible, meet regularly to attend its business, and plan its general ministry, which shall be presented to the Council. Written communication will be made to the Council at least once per year.
7. The purposes and duties of the Standing Ministry Teams shall be as follows:

A. Financial Resources

1. Prepare the Church's annual operating budget to be submitted to the Council and Congregation for adoption.
2. Insure that the annual operating budget of the Church is underwritten.
3. Disburse funds within the annual operating budget and make monthly financial reports to the Council.
4. Promote special financial gifts to the church and its world causes through special financial efforts, wills, annuities, etc.
5. Stimulate the widest possible interest on the part of the membership in the practice of Christian stewardship.
6. Promote tithing and proportionate giving.
7. Promote special projects in stewardship and hold special stewardship and financial classes.

B. Personnel Committee

1. The Personnel Committee will be appointed by the Council and will consist of seven members serving three-year terms. Terms will be staggered.
2. The Second Vice Moderator will facilitate the Personnel Committee.
3. The Personnel Committee will act as an agent of the Council and Congregation to develop and recommend Church personnel policies, review and approve employee performance, determine employee salary increases, propose the annual personnel salary and expenses for the annual operating budget and recommend to the Council the employment or termination of non-clergy Church staff.

C. Trustees

1. There shall be seven Trustees selected by the Nominating Committee and affirmed by the Congregation. Trustees will serve three-year terms and their terms will be staggered.
2. Trustees shall act as advisors and resource persons for the Church, supervise all endowment and trust funds, maintain safe-deposit box records (including abstracts), and perform

such other duties as assigned by the Moderator or instructed by the Council.

3. Four members shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Trustees.

D. Audit Committee

1. The Audit Committee will be appointed by February of each year to audit the books of the Treasurer.
2. The Committee will consist of four members serving two-year terms and will be appointed by the Council.
3. Committee members will have staggered two-year terms so that two will have terms expiring each year.

E. Pastoral Relations

1. Each Clergy Staff will have a Pastoral Relations Committee made up of at least six members.
2. The Committee will be selected jointly by the Clergy Staff and Council.
3. Committee members will serve one-year terms but may be reappointed.

F. Nominating Committee

1. *The Nominating Committee shall be comprised of nine members. Three shall be selected by the Elders from the current serving Elders, three shall be selected by the Deacons from the current serving Deacons and three shall be selected by the Council from the Congregation at large. The Elders, Deacons and Council are encouraged to select one of their three committee members to repeat from the previous year for the sake of continuity. The Pastor will be an advisory member.*
2. *The Nominating Committee members will serve one-year terms but may be reappointed once before laying out at least one year.*
3. *The Council will appoint the Facilitator of the Nominating Committee.*
4. The Congregation will be the body that acts on the nominations of the new Council members, Elders, Deacons, Trust-

ees and the officers for the Congregation: Moderator, First Vice Moderator, Second Vice Moderator, Treasurer, Secretary, Cashier, Historian, and two Assistant Treasurers.

5. Council vacancies will be filled as soon as possible by the Nominating Committee. All other vacancies will be filled as soon as possible by the Council.

Article XII. Special Ministry Teams

1. Special Ministry Teams are appointed by the Council when needed to do the work of the Church. The purposes of the Special Ministry Teams and general funding/expense parameters will be provided to the Congregation by the Council.
2. The Council will select the Facilitators of all Special Ministry Teams.
3. Membership on each Special Ministry Team shall be on the basis of interest and qualification for that Ministry.
4. The number of members on Special Ministry Teams will be determined by the Council. The Council may, at its discretion, select Special Ministry Team members and/or recruit volunteers.
5. *Special Ministry Team Facilitators shall not serve more than two consecutive years unless deemed a critical immediate need for the Church.*
6. Each Special Ministry Team shall organize itself to accomplish the Ministry for which it is responsible, meet regularly to attend its business, and plan its general ministry, which will then be presented to the Council. Regular written reports shall be made to the Council at least annually.

Article XIII. Elections

1. *In June the Nominating Committee will be formed by the Elders, Deacons and Council as described in Article XI.*
2. This Committee will bring its recommendations to the November meeting of the Congregation. A majority vote of the Congregation present and voting shall be required for adoption of the Committee's recommendations or for any other matters.
3. The Nominating Committee shall explain the obligation of Council, Elder and Deacon membership to prospective candi-

dates and obtain signed statements of their understanding of the By-Laws.

4. Vacancies in Elder, Deacon and Council membership which occur during the fiscal year will be filled by appointment of the Nominating Committee, pending approval by the Congregation at the next scheduled Congregational meeting.
5. Members elected to fill vacancies will serve only the unexpired portions of the terms vacated but then may be reaffirmed for a full term.
6. The number of members of the Elders and Deacons shall be governed by the number required to carry on the work and activities of the Church and such number may be increased or decreased by the Council upon recommendation of the Elders and Deacons.
7. A person must be a member of the Congregation for a period of not less than six months before becoming eligible to serve as Elder, Deacon or Trustee.

Article XIV. Use of Church Property

No property, equipment, or supplies of the Church shall be loaned, rented, or used on or off the premises for other than functions and activities of this Church without the approval of and/or upon terms set by the Council.

Article XV. Church Dissolution

Subject to the laws of the State of Oklahoma, in the event that the Church is discontinued or dissolved, all Church assets shall be transferred to the Christian Church of Oklahoma, affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Officers, Trustees, and members of the Church, without compensation, shall perform whatever tasks and execute such documents as may be required to accomplish this transfer. Should the Christian Church in Oklahoma not exist at the time of dissolution, all the assets shall be transferred to its successor that is affiliated with The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

Article XVI. Limited Liability and Indemnification

The private property of the Church members shall not be liable for the debts of the organization. The Council, by resolution, may provide for indemnification by the Church for expenses actually and necessarily incurred in connection with the defense of any action, suit, or proceeding in which any Church member is made a part, excepting only those matters in which a Church member is judged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of duty.

Article XVII. Amendments

These By-laws and the Certificate of Incorporation may be amended by a favorable two-thirds vote of members of the Congregation present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Congregation, providing all members have been publicly notified of the proposed amendment at least two weeks prior to voting thereon.

Article XVIII. Adoption of By-Laws

1. These By-Laws shall be submitted to the Congregation for approval and a favorable two-thirds vote of those present and voting shall be required for adoption.
2. Upon adoption, a copy of these By-Laws shall be made available to every member of the Church and to every subsequent member.

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