



**By Laws  
of the  
First Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)**

**Telephone 405.769.2717**

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**Midwest City, Oklahoma 73130-4805**

**Revised 8 February 2015**

- I. The church year shall begin on January first of each year. The non-ministerial staff shall observe Federal Holidays unless the Senior Minister and the employee agree to make arrangements otherwise. Therefore, the church office shall normally be closed during these times.
  
- II. The General Board:
  - A. Shall usually hold its regular meetings on the second Sunday of each month with the exception of May when the meeting will be held on the first Sunday to avoid conflict with Mother's Day
  - B. May hold special meetings to be called by the Chairperson or Chairperson-elect or upon written petition of three (3) or more members
  - C. May vote either by physical presence or proxy. A pre-printed, personalized proxy form shall be provided with the meeting announcement and that signed form, or assigned member generated form containing the same information, must be presented to the General Board Secretary by either the grantor or holder of the proxy prior to the meeting in order for the proxy to count for quorum/voting purposes
  - D. Achieves a quorum with one third of the members of the General Board present or by their proxy.

E. Shall observe the following order of business:

1. Meeting called to order by presiding officer
2. Devotions and prayer
3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting
4. Report and approval of the Contributions and Financial Coordinator report
5. Report and approval of the Treasurer's report
6. Acceptance of Consent Agenda reports
7. Report of departments and auxiliary organizations not included in the Consent Agenda reports
8. Report of regular and special committees not included in the Consent Agenda reports
9. Action on recommendations growing out of reports
10. Consideration of unfinished business carried over from previous meetings
11. New business and program suggestions for future activities
12. Minister(s) report, inspirational moment, and benediction
13. Adjournment.

III. The plan of procedure for administering the church programs shall be as follows:

A. The task of administering the programs of the church shall be delegated to the following functional departments.

1. Worship and Devotional Life

2. Christian Education
3. Evangelism
4. Membership
5. Community Life and Fellowship
6. World Outreach
7. Stewardship
8. Property
9. Landscape

B. Special committees shall be appointed when needed.

C. The membership of each functional department shall be selected in the following manner, subject to the confirmation of the General Board.

1. The Chairperson, Chairperson-elect and Senior Minister shall constitute a nominating committee to select the respective department directors.
2. This committee shall then act with the respective department directors in the selection of the members of each department and each department shall consist of at least four (4) to six (6) members in addition to the director.
3. Directors of all functional departments shall be selected from within the department in which they have served for at least one year. When deemed advisable, a member who does not fulfill this criteria may be appointed as a director as recommended by the nominating committee and approved by the Board. All department directors are *ex-officio* voting members of the Board upon confirmation of the appointment by the Board. Furthermore, directors shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive years.
4. Membership of each functional department shall be on the basis of qualification for the task, regardless of membership on the General Board.

- D. Each functional department shall administer its program in cooperation with other functional departments and organize itself to conduct the business for which it is responsible from February of the current year through January of the next year.
1. Train newly appointed members, meet regularly to attend to its business, and maintain a continuity book to document processes, procedures and duties
  2. Develop and submit an annual operating budget to the Stewardship Director and Treasurer as well as providing rationale for program expenditures during budget building and execution
  3. Plan the departmental program and present it at the Annual Planning Meeting. Conduct and submit an annual inventory to the Church Secretary to be filed in the church office no later than June first (1) using the form included in the church management software. These audits are to be filed in the church office.
  4. All department expenditures shall be pre-authorized by the department director. Authorization for expenditures which are non-recurring or expenditures not budgeted may be requested by completing the form used for this purpose. This form is available in the office and in the Church Management Software. After department director authorization, the form is forwarded to the Treasurer and Bookkeeper for their action and posting.
  5. All functional departments and others making Board reports shall submit them in advance and use the consent agenda format as available in the office and in the Church Management Software, unless presentation to the Board is needed.
- E. The purpose and duties of the functional departments shall be as follows:
1. Worship Department
    - i. It shall be responsible for the public worship of the church including its pulpit supply, the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, music, ushering, supplying receptionists to welcome attendants at regular services, mid-week and special prayer services.
    - ii. It shall also encourage the devotional life among individual members and homes of the church families thereby fostering Christian home life.

## 2. Christian Education Department

- i. It shall be the purpose of this department to develop an effective program of religious education for the entire constituency of the church in keeping with the general objectives of Christian education.
- ii. It shall be responsible for planning and administering the total educational program of the church including church school, Wonders of Worship (WOW), Bible School, youth activities, mid-week educational projects, leadership education, and distribution of Christian literature.
- iii. Specific guidance for administering the WOW program includes the recruitment of adults to serve as story tellers and as greeters, to create a lesson plan for each calendar year for each classroom, and to maintain equipment used in classrooms (such as cleanliness of the materials, completeness of the story sets, adequate supplies of "work time" activities, and completeness of supply of "feast time" items).

## 3. Evangelism Department

- i. It shall be the purpose of this department to cultivate, plan, and administer an evangelistic spirit within the church.
- ii. It shall be responsible for developing an evangelistic church, sponsoring a year-round program of evangelism which reaches into every age level and every phase of the church life, compiling a list of prospective members, and planning and directing special evangelistic projects.

## 4. Membership Department

- i. It shall be the purpose of this department to maintain the closest possible contact with the entire church membership, encourage each member to participate fully in the life of the church, and develop a spirit of Christian community.
- ii. It shall be responsible for assisting the ministers in the pastoral care of the membership, keeping accurate membership records, updating applicable tracking tools, promoting visitation projects, calling on members, and organizing

others to do likewise.

#### 5. Community Life and Fellowship Department

- i. It shall be the purpose of this department to provide an adequate program of social life for the church and give publicity to church life and activities.
- ii. It shall be responsible to maintain the closest possible contact with the entire church membership to develop a spirit of comradeship and fellowship (such as athletic programs, small group social gatherings, all-church functions, monthly all-church activities, etc.).
- iii. It shall be responsible, working cooperatively with the Evangelism Department, for coordinating events and informing members and those in the community to join into the life and fellowship of the church.

#### 6. World Outreach Department

- i. It shall be the purpose of this department to create and foster a world vision within the church and its auxiliary organizations and to lead in planning and administering the outreach program of the church.
- ii. It shall be responsible for planning and promoting a definite program of missionary education in every department of the church, caring for local and general benevolent needs not otherwise provided for, sponsoring interdenominational activities and projects of social action, and promoting conventions, conferences and retreats.
- iii. It shall fund and establish procedures for the administration of gas and grocery money cards.

#### 7. Stewardship Department

- i. It shall be the purpose of this department to develop within the congregation an understanding of the full meaning of Christian stewardship necessary to provide for the financial needs of the church and to provide a spiritual challenge and enrichment for each participating member. It is responsible for supervising the

preparation and subscribing of the budget for the congregation.

- ii. It shall receive funds and contributions and assist the Contributions/Financial Coordinator with financial record keeping by enlisting volunteers to count and aid in recording receipts. In cooperation with the Trustees, the Department shall encourage the creation of endowments to benefit the local congregation and our universal Christian mission.
- iii. Department membership will also include the Treasurer and the Contributions/Financial Coordinator.

#### 8. Property Department

- i. It shall be responsible, in cooperation with the Trustees and the Treasurer, functional departments, and auxiliary organizations, for keeping all property and equipment in proper condition, studying needs and making recommendations for improvements, coordinating with the custodian on property maintenance and projects, caring for drainage and pavement structures (e.g. ice/snow is removed from pavements/sidewalks and other appearance issues), keeping the properties adequately insured against possible loss, damage, or liability, and maintaining a list of non-property assets including but not limited to the septic system, signs, drainage systems, and postal boxes.
- ii. It shall be responsible for proper care, maintenance, and operation of all vehicles and shall develop and oversee the policies pertaining to their use.

#### 9. Landscape Department

- i. The primary purpose of this department is to create a sustainable environment which enhances places for worship, encourages fellowship, ensures safety of persons, and presents an inviting atmosphere for visitors.
- ii. The department shall ensure plantings comprise cultivars and varieties that are perennial, drought tolerant, requiring minimal maintenance and irrigation, do not contribute to erosion or pollution, and collectively provide year-round interest. The only permitted annual plantings will be located at the front entrances of the church and the Jeanette Clemons Activity Center courtyard.

- iii. The department shall ensure the landscape is free of hazards, inform the Memorial Committee of proposed projects, contract and supervise the maintenance, lawn, and landscaping services, and oversee the Garden Shed and its contents. Any addition to the grounds whether plantings, memorials, real improvements, or property must be coordinated and approved by the department.

#### F. Special Committees

1. When needed to administer the work of the church, the Chairperson shall appoint with the approval of the General Board, such special committees as may be needed. These committees shall perform duties assigned, shall report and make recommendations to the Board, and shall continue for such time as deemed necessary by the appointing authority.
2. Ongoing special committees shall include:
  - i. The Personnel Committee
    - a. The Personnel Committee shall consist of:
      - i. A Chairperson appointed by the General Board Chairperson and approved by the General Board
      - ii. The Chairperson of the General Board
      - iii. The Senior Minister of the Church
      - iv. Two (2) other persons appointed by the General Board. Each member of the committee shall be appointed for a one (1) year term.
    - b. The committee shall oversee all paid employees of the First Christian Church with the exception of the ministers. It shall have the duty of developing or causing to develop job descriptions for employees other than the ministers. It shall employ (with Board approval), recommend compensation, discipline and dismiss such employees. It shall annually evaluate staff performance, recommend changes in duties and compensation, and submit all financial



data/changes to the Treasurer and Stewardship Department.

- c. The committee shall see that staff relationships and responsibilities are clearly understood.

ii. The Memorial Committee

- a. The Memorial Committee shall be composed of the Trustees, the Chairperson of the Congregation, and the Senior Minister. A chairperson for the committee shall be elected from the group. The committee will be formed each year after the election of officers of the congregation.
- b. This committee shall serve as the stewards of memorial and endowment funds. The committee will recommend to the General Board investment and disposition of memorial and endowment funds.
- c. The committee shall serve as a screening point for suggested memorial and special projects to include additions to the grounds, and shall make recommendations to the General Board. It shall maintain a "living" list comprising a spectrum of small to large projects to offer to those who wish to gift to the church. Unlisted projects may be considered but will require approval by the committee. This shall be done as needed or upon special request.
- d. All memorial and special gifts shall be properly recorded. An acknowledgment shall be mailed to the donor and a report of the gift shall be mailed to the family of the one for whom the gift was given.
- e. All memorial funds shall be used solely for approved memorial projects and shall be administered by the Memorial Committee in consultation with the Treasurer and Stewardship Department. Designated gifts shall be used as specified by the donor and recommended by the Memorial Committee for approval by the General Board. Undesignated gifts may be used for property/capital improvement, the operations fund, and/or program development and recommended by the Memorial Committee for approval by the General Board.

- f. The congregation shall be kept aware of the projects the General Board has chosen and the current status of these projects.
  - g. The family of the person who has been honored with a memorial shall be given the opportunity to select one of the approved projects.
  - h. The Committee should request suggestions for projects from members of the congregation and from the functional departments of the Board.
- iii. Long-Range Planning Committee
- a. The Long-Range Planning Committee shall consist of seven (7) to twelve (12) people as follows:
    - i. Minister(s)
    - ii. Chairperson of Official Board
    - iii. Chairperson-Elect of Official Board
    - iv. Three (3) to seven (7) adults (Appointment)
    - v. Two (2) youths (Senior High) (Appointment)
  - b. Appointment to this committee shall be made by the Chairperson of the Board with approval of the Official Board, and shall be for a term of two (2) years.
  - c. Purpose: To identify, project, plan, recommend Christ-centered visions for the ongoing spiritual, physical and numerical development and growth of the congregation.
- iv. Interior Standards Committee
- a. The Interior Standards Committee shall consist of five (5) persons as follows:
    - i. Senior Minister

- ii. Four (4) members at large.
- b. The four (4) at large members shall be appointed by the Board Chair for a three (3) year term. The members will have a staggered service time so to allow a new member to be appointed each year to offset the member whose term expires.
- c. Duties of the committee:
  - i. Décor & approval for all common usage spaces comprising entry, sanctuary, foyer/lobby, hallways, library, office suite (including offices, conference room, receptionist space), two (2) classrooms adjacent to sanctuary, Fellowship Hall area, storage areas, and restrooms
  - ii. All furniture, art work, mirrors and wall hangings shall be approved by the Interior Standards Committee.
  - iii. In coordination with other departments and committees responsible for physical assets, develop and administer a process to discard, sell or donate unused, unneeded, and irreparable items as designated by the directors and committee chairpersons.
- v. Children's Corner Advisory Committee
  - a. The committee shall be composed of the Children's Corner Director, at least four (4) church members, at least one (1) parent for each increment of thirty-five (35) children enrolled in the program, a member of the personnel committee, and a member of the stewardship committee. Committee members shall be appointed annually and may be reappointed.
  - b. Children's Corner report and business items shall be presented to the General Board by the Director of Children's Corner, or by a committee member serving as a Children's Corner representative.
  - c. The committee shall address items including, but not limited to: staff and staff salaries, calendar year planning, ideas, suggestions, and acquisition of supplies and equipment, fundraising, and tuition adjustments.

- vi. Youth Ministry Leadership Team (YMLT)
  - a. The team shall be composed of the Associate Minister, at least two (2) members of *Chi Rho* (middle school), at least two (2) members of CYF (high school), and all of the *Chi Rho* and CYF sponsors. Elected members serve one year, but may extend an additional year if requested. Team members are expected to be actively present in both congregational worship and youth gatherings. The team will address items including, but not limited to:
    - i. Constructing a calendar of activities, planning at least a month in advance
    - ii. Planning curriculum/programming for the *Chi Rho* and CYF Sunday and Wednesday Youth Groups and participating with the Education Department in the planning of the *Chi Rho* and CYF Sunday School curriculum
    - iii. Planning regular Mission Work (local and beyond) and fun activities and retreats
    - iv. Serving as a point of contact for the congregation and the youth ministry of the congregation
    - v. Sharing joys, challenges and prayer concerns experienced by the youth and adult sponsors
    - vi. Meeting as necessary, but no less than once each quarter.
  - b. *Chi Rho* and CYF Sponsors are those who regularly attend weekly gatherings. At least one (1) youth sponsor is needed for every five (5) youth at gatherings.
    - i. All youth sponsors and leaders who work with the youth are required to have background checks.
    - ii. Youth sponsors should be church members and/or be regular church attendees.
  - c. The Associate Minister responsible for ministry with youth is charged with the following:
    - i. Calling meetings of the YMLT

- ii. Presiding over YMLT Meetings
  - iii. Serving as a point of contact for the YMLT, the congregation and the church Staff
  - iv. Recruiting youth sponsors and providing training opportunities for them
  - v. Coordinating a process where the youth elect peers to serve on the YMLT
  - vi. Offering a minimum of two (2) parent meetings per year, to share the calendar, scope of ministry, and to collect parent feedback
  - vii. Insuring that the actions of the YMLT are reported at monthly General Board meetings
  - viii. Coordinating the election (by their peers) of a replacement for any youth who is unable to complete his /her term on the YMLT
  - ix. Securing background checks for all youth sponsors before they work with youth programs at every level and for any others working regularly in the youth programs of the church.
- vii. Junior Youth Fellowship (JYF) – 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grades
- a. The Associate Minister oversees the JYF, but sponsors have primary direct leadership of the group and serve for a one (1) year term, which may be extended if agreeable with all parties involved. The JYF sponsors in coordination with the Associate Minister are responsible for items including, but not limited to:
    - i. Constructing a calendar of activities, planning at least a month in advance
    - ii. Planning curriculum/programming for Sunday Youth Group and participating with the Christian Education Department as requested to plan the Sunday School curriculum
    - iii. Brain-storming/planning fun activities

- iv. Serving as a point of contact for the congregation and for the JYF ministry.

#### G. Auxiliary Organizations

1. The purpose and responsibility of each of these groups shall be outlined in their own constitution, by-laws, or plan of procedure.
2. All auxiliary organizations shall be approved by and function under the auspices of the General Board.
3. These organizations shall cooperate with the other functional departments of the church, not only in planning and administering the total program of the church, but also in developing their individual programs in the best interest of the total program.

#### H. Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC)

1. The Pastoral Relations Committee comprises not less than three (3) and no more than five (5) church members to provide emotional and tangible support for each minister and their family, and regularly serve as a channel for confidential, two-way communication between the minister and the congregation. The PRC does not supplant nor circumvent existing informal and formal processes within the church, but enhances them by focusing its attention on providing feedback from the congregation regarding concerns and expectations of the ministry in order to build up the body of Christ.
2. The PRC represents the love and grace of the congregation for the minister and family with the goals of smoothly transitioning them into the church and continuously building a relationship of acceptance, trust, and confidentiality between the pastor and the congregation to fulfill the church ministry. Confidentiality between committee members is paramount.
3. Designated members of the search committee shall serve as interim PRC following the call of a new minister until the PRC is formed. The church board ratifies the establishment of the PRC, however, the selection of its members are appointed separately from any other formal nominating and election process. The PRC comprises at least one (1) Elder and the Chairperson of the Search Committee. Other selections shall be made through mutual consultation between the Chairperson of the Elders and the Chairperson of the Board. Once the committee

members have been selected, the Board Chairperson shall report the appointments to the church board. The PRC shall establish itself and meet with the new minister within one month of arrival. At its first meeting, the PRC shall select its own chairperson. Members shall serve a minimum of one (1) year. Thereafter, the minister and the PRC Chairperson mutually agree upon its composition and member rotations, however, it shall always include at least one (1) Elder. When the minister leaves the congregation or when the PRC decides its function is no longer needed, the PRC shall cease to function.

4. The PRC shall meet monthly for six (6) months after its first meeting with each member hosting the committee in a private setting for a casual meal. Thereafter, the committee shall determine the frequency and venue of meetings in order to maintain continuity, sustain the dynamics of regular support/feedback, and guard against becoming a crisis management agent. The PRC gives the minister the opportunity to share whatever is on her/his heart or mind. The PRC shall not keep minutes or report the substance of its meetings. At any time, the pastor may contact the PRC to convene a meeting.
5. The PRC shall host an informal "night out" for the spouse once a year to provide an opportunity for the PRC to listen to concerns, if he/she chooses to do so. Under no circumstances shall the PRC give "directional" feedback or convey any confidential information resulting from its meetings. At any time, the spouse may contact the PRC to convene a meeting.

IV. The procedure governing employment of the staff shall be as follows:

- A. Employees shall be secured upon recommendation of the respective functional department concerned in coordination with the Personnel Committee, the Treasurer, and the Stewardship Department.
- B. Employment shall be by a two thirds vote of Board members. Members may vote either by physical presence or proxy as described in the Constitution; each employee is responsible to the General board through the Personnel Committee.
- C. A written statement covering terms of employment shall be included in the Board Meeting minutes, a copy filed in the church office, a copy given to the employee, the Treasurer, and the Stewardship Department.

V. The Executive Cabinet

A. The Executive Cabinet shall be composed of the directors of all functional departments, Minister(s), Chairperson of the Elders, Chairpersons of the Diaconate, and the Executive Committee of the Board. The Executive Committee of the Board includes the Chairperson, Chairperson-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. In addition, although non-voting members, the Contributions/Financial Coordinator, Bookkeeper, and Youth Ministry Leadership Team Director are encouraged to participate in the Executive Cabinet meetings.

B. The purpose of the Cabinet shall be:

1. To coordinate the activities of the various departments and other organizations within the church to assure compatibility and consistency with overall church objectives and programs
2. To study, review, and evaluate on a continuing basis both established and suggested new programs and activities of the church and to make recommendations to the Board concerning them
3. It shall be the responsibility of the Cabinet to hold its meetings when needed during the two week period prior to the General Board Meeting
4. The Chairperson-Elect of the congregation shall be the Chairperson of the Cabinet.

VI. These By Laws or any attachments to them may be amended by a two thirds majority vote of the members of the General Board in a regular or special meeting provided the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the membership of the General Board at least one (1) meeting prior to the vote thereon. Members may vote either by physical presence or proxy as described in the Constitution.