

CONSTITUTION
OF
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST), HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

1.0 PREAMBLE

1.1 Name: The name of this organization shall be the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Huntsville, Alabama.

1.2 Denominational Affiliation: This congregation shall be affiliated with the denomination known as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and is committed to the principals of that body.

1.3 Preamble to the Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): As members of the Christian Church,

We confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the World.

In Christ's name and by his grace we accept our mission of witness and service to all people.

We rejoice in God, maker of heaven and earth, and in the covenant of love which binds us to God and one another.

Through baptism into Christ we enter into newness of life and are made one with the whole people of God.

In the communion of the Holy Spirit we are joined together in discipleship and in obedience to Christ.

At the table of the Lord we celebrate with thanksgiving the saving acts and presence of Christ.

Within the universal church, we receive the gift of ministry and the light of scripture.

In the bonds of Christian faith we yield ourselves to God that we may serve the One whose kingdom has no end.

Blessing, glory and honor be to God forever. Amen.

1.4 Statement of Mission: Our mission is to seek others to join the fellowship of Christ's followers; to nurture that fellowship through worship, prayer, education, companionship, music, and stewardship; and to expand the fellowship with compassion, love and service to others.

1.5 Statement of Powers: This congregation is organized as a corporate body, which Articles of Incorporation are recorded in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Madison County, Alabama, in Corporation Book 6, page 342. As such a corporation, this congregation shall have all powers granted by the laws of the State of Alabama.

2.0 MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Requirements for Membership: The membership of this church (hereafter “Membership”) shall consist of those persons who are identified as members at the time of the adoption of this Constitution and those who may hereafter unite with it through profession of faith and baptism or by transfer of membership from any church professing belief in Jesus Christ (hereafter “Members”). All Members of the church shall have the right to vote.

2.2 Exclusive Powers of the Membership: The following powers shall be exercised only by the Membership at a duly convened meeting of the Membership, as provided for herein:

- 2.2.1 The purchase, sale, lease or encumbrance of real property;
- 2.2.2 The borrowing of money;
- 2.2.3 The approval of the budget;
- 2.2.4 The call or discharge of ministers; and
- 2.2.5 The election of officers except as otherwise provided.

3.0 OFFICERS

3.1 Elders: Elders shall be elected for a term of two (2) years. The number of elders shall be set by the Board annually before the nominating process.

3.2 Members of the Diaconate: Members of the Diaconate shall be elected for a term of two (2) years. The number of Diaconate members shall be set by the Board annually before the nominating process.

3.3 Conveners of the Mission Families: Conveners shall be elected for a term of two (2) years. There shall be at least one (1) convener per Mission Family.

3.4 Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the Board: There shall be a Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the Board who shall be elected by the Membership. The term of office of the Moderator of the Board shall be one (1) year and the Moderator may not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. The Membership shall elect a Vice-Moderator of the Board who shall serve for a one (1) year term and shall succeed to the office of Moderator of the Board at the end of the term of the Moderator, or immediately upon the resignation or removal from office of the Moderator. In the event the Vice-Moderator succeeds to the office of Moderator before the completion of the full one year term of the Moderator, the Vice-Moderator shall be eligible to serve as Moderator for an additional one year term. The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator if the Moderator is unable to serve and may serve a full term as Moderator of the Board after completion of such unexpired term.

3.5 Trustees: There shall be three (3) Trustees who shall be elected by the Membership. The term of office shall be six (6) years. One new Trustee being elected every two (2) years.

3.5.1 Members of the Congregation may suggest names for proposed Trustees to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will present to the Board a slate of officers that will be voted on at a called Congregational meeting.

3.5.2 In the event a Trustee shall resign or otherwise vacate that office prior to completion of the full six-year term, the Nominating Committee shall present a nominee to the Board to be elected to fill the unfilled term.

3.5.3 Should an individual be elected to fill the remainder of an unexpired six-year term, and such remainder shall be equal to or greater than three years, that individual shall not be eligible to serve an additional term; if less than three years, that individual may be eligible to serve an additional term.

3.6 Other Officers: The following officers shall each be elected for two (2) year terms:

- 3.6.1 Financial Secretary;
- 3.6.2 Assistant Financial Secretaries (2);
- 3.6.3 Church Treasurer; and
- 3.6.4 Assistant Church Treasurer.

3.7 Election of Officers: There shall be an election of officers every odd numbered year at a called meeting of the Membership to be held prior to the end of April. The Moderator and Vice moderator shall be elected every year at a called meeting of the Congregation.

3.7.1 The Board shall set the number of Mission Families, Elders, and Diaconate Members every odd numbered year at the February Board meeting. A **Nominating Committee** appointed by the Moderator of the Board shall request from the Membership suggestions for nominees for the officers elected by the Membership. The Nominating Committee presents its suggestions to the Board in March, and the congregation elects in April. The nominating committee shall submit in writing to the Board and Membership a slate of nominees for the vacancies at least ten (10) days before the meeting for election of officers.

3.7.2 Consistent with the rules of parliamentary procedure, nominations may be accepted from the floor at the Membership meeting for the election of officers.

3.7.3 To be eligible for nomination to hold an office an individual shall have been a member in good standing for at least six months and have agreed to serve if elected.

3.7.4 Election to office shall be by a majority of those Members present and voting. If there are more nominees than vacancies, then such nominee or nominees (in a number sufficient to fill the office) receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected.

3.8 Term Limitation: No Elder, Member of the Diaconate, or Convener shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in that office.

3.8.1 In the event an Elder, Member of the Diaconate, or Convener shall resign or otherwise vacate that office prior to completion of the full length of term for that office, a special election shall be held in the manner prescribed in 3.6.1 above to fill the remainder of such term of office.

3.8.2 Should an Trustee be elected to fill the remainder of an unexpired six-year term, and such remainder shall be equal to or greater than three years, that individual shall not be eligible to serve an additional term; if less than three years, that individual may be eligible to serve an additional term.

3.9 Vacancies: Should a vacancy occur in any office elected by the congregation during the term of such office, the Nominating committee shall provide to the Board one (1) or more nominees for such position. The Board shall elect from such nominees a person to serve until the next Membership meeting for the election of officers.

4.0 BOARD

4.1 Powers of the Board: The Board shall have all powers necessary for the administration and operation of the church except those powers expressly reserved to the Membership or otherwise provided herein. The Board shall consider any item listed in the “Exclusive Powers of the Membership” (Section 2.2) before consideration of that item by the Membership. The Board shall consider such item before presenting that item to the Membership. (If the Board does not approve such item, the item may nevertheless be presented to the Membership according to “Other Meetings (Section 8.4).)

4.2 Membership of the Board: The voting membership of the Board shall consist of two representatives from each Mission Family: Membership of the Board: The voting membership of the Board shall consist of two members of the deaconate elected by each Mission Family (any member of the MF deaconate may serve as substitute if the elected deacon(s) is not available to attend the Board meeting). The Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Minister(s), Secretary of the Board, and Parliamentarian shall be non-voting members of the Board. (In the event of a tie vote, the presiding Moderator may cast the deciding vote.) Any member of the congregation may bring business before the Board, but items must be seconded by a voting MF deaconate before it may be considered.

4.3 Meetings: The Board shall meet monthly and at such other times as are necessary at the call of the Moderator of the Board. Board meetings are open to any member.

4.4 Quorum: No action can be taken by the Board unless each Mission Family is represented and more than half of the Members of the Diaconate are present.*

4.5 Secretary of the Board: The Moderator shall appoint a secretary of the Board. [See Bylaws for duties.]

5.0 MISSION FAMILIES

5.1 General: The Membership shall be organized in small groupings (the number decided by the Board), each of which shall represent, to the extent possible, a cross section of the congregation. These groupings shall be known as Mission Families.

5.2 Creation of Mission Families: Creation of Mission Families. The Membership shall be divided at the beginning of each odd numbered program year. Each Mission Family shall include one (1) Convener, one (1) Elder, and at least four (4) members of the Diaconate. The Members shall remain in the Mission Family for two (2) years. Division of the Members and assignment to the Mission Families shall be done by the Ministers, Chair of the Elders, new Conveners, and Mission Family Coordinator.

6.0 TASK GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

6.1 General: Task Groups and committees shall be created and function as defined in the Bylaws.

7.0 THE MINISTERS

7.1 Call of Ministers: The Membership may call one or more ministers. If more than one minister is called, then one shall be designated as Senior Minister and the others shall be designated as Associate, * or Licensed Ministers.

Proposed change: add Youth.

7.2 Qualifications: All Senior and Associate Ministers shall be ordained and in good standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination. Specialized ministers shall be licensed by the Alabama-NW Florida Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for ministry at First Christian Church, Huntsville, Alabama.

7.3 Vacancies: Whenever a minister shall die, resign, be discharged, or otherwise not be able to serve, or the position of a new minister be created, such vacancy shall be filled in the following manner:

7.3.1 The Moderator of the Board shall appoint a Search Committee of not less than five (5) members who shall seek for and recommend to the Board a candidate for the vacancy.

Proposed Change: The Moderator shall submit to the Board names of not less than five (5) members as nominees to serve on a Search Committee that shall be charged with responsibility to locate and recommend to the Board a candidate to fill the vacant ministerial position.

7.3.2 The Board shall consider and approve such candidate before submission to the Membership.

7.3.3 Only the Membership may issue the call to the candidate. The call shall include the financial arrangements with the candidate. To call a Minister, the call must be approved by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Membership present and voting at a meeting of the Membership.

7.4 Discharge: Any minister serves at the will of the Membership but may be removed and the employment terminated only by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Membership present and voting at a meeting of the Membership.

7.4.1 Any actions brought to remove a minister should be first reviewed and approved by two thirds (2/3) of the Board present and voting.

7.4.2 Once any such action is brought and at least thirty (30) days before the Board brings the matter to a vote, the Secretary of the Congregation shall post a notice of such action in all printed publications of the Church, on Church bulletin boards and on the Church website.

7.4.3 Removal shall be only upon a vote of two thirds (2/3) of the Membership present and voting at a properly called Congregational Meeting.

8.0 MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERSHIP

8.1 Election of Officers: A meeting of the Membership shall be held prior to the end of April each odd numbered year for the purpose of electing a Financial Secretary; two (2) Assistant Financial Secretaries; Church Treasurer; and Assistant Church Treasurer. The Moderator and Vice moderator shall be elected every year.

8.2 Approval of the Budget: There shall be a meeting of the Membership annually to approve the budget for the next fiscal year. This meeting shall occur no later than the first Sunday in December.

8.3 Informational Meetings: Twice a year, in February and August, a meeting of the Membership shall be called to report to the Membership the activities and programs of the church and to solicit from the Membership its suggestions and comments. No formal business may be transacted at such meetings unless included in the call of such meeting.

8.4 Other Meetings: The Moderator of the Board may call special meetings of the Membership. Any forty (40) or more Members may cause a special meeting of the Membership to be called upon written petition subscribed by them and submitted to the Moderator of the Board at least two (2) weeks in advance of the meetings. Once any such action is brought and at least thirty (30) days before the Membership brings the matter to a vote, the Secretary of the Congregation shall post a notice of such action in all printed publications of the Church, on Church bulletin boards, and on the Church website.

8.5 Notice of Meeting: Except as otherwise provided herein, written Notices of all meetings and agendas for the meetings shall be provided to the Membership at least two (2) weeks in advance of the meetings.

8.6 Rules of Order: All meetings of the Membership and the Board shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order* (current version). No matter may be considered for formal action at a meeting of the Membership unless such matter was included in the call for the meeting. A Parliamentarian shall be appointed by the Moderator and shall attend all meetings.

9.0 AMENDMENTS

9.1 Proposal: An amendment to the Constitution may be proposed by the Board or by any forty (40) or more Members who shall subscribe their names thereto.

9.2 Notice: Written Notice of the meeting and the text of the proposed amendment shall be provided to the Membership at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting of the Membership at which it will be considered.

9.3 Adoption: This Constitution may be amended at any duly called meeting of the Membership by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present and voting.

10.0 BYLAWS

10.1 **Adoption:** The membership may also adopt Bylaws. Such Bylaws may be amended in the same way as the amendment of the Constitution except that a majority vote of the Membership present and voting shall be required to amend the Bylaws.

11.0 FISCAL YEAR AND PROGRAM YEAR

11.1 **Fiscal Year:** The fiscal year of the corporation shall be the calendar year.

11.2 **Program Year:** The church program shall be run from July 1 to June 30; and the terms of all officers, Task Groups, Committees, Mission Families, and Representatives shall begin on July 1 and run for two (2) years except the Nominating Committee whose term shall begin on January 1 and shall be two (2) years.

Approved September 7, 2008