

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Iowa City By-laws
Approved February 24, 2019

I. Name

The name of this congregation is The First Christian Church of Iowa City, Iowa affiliated with Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and incorporated under the non-profit provisions of Chapter 504 of the Code of the State of Iowa.

II. Purpose

We, the people of The First Christian Church, are a diverse family of believers and seekers, united in Christ, who share God's love and the good news of God's grace with all persons through daily acts of justice, mercy and love. This document has been developed as a set of guidelines to help us live more faithfully into God's calling.

III. Membership

Members are participants in the life of this congregation who have declared their desire to be considered members of this congregation. This declaration may happen during a worship service or in conversation with the pastor. A membership list will be kept in the office. People may participate fully in the life of First Christian Church without being members unless otherwise noted in this document.

Dual membership is offered for those who desire to be members both of First Christian as well as another congregation. This allows persons who have two places of residence, have relocated temporarily, or have two places of worship to be fully involved as members of First Christian Church.

IV. Baptism

As a community of both seekers and believers, we do not require baptism for membership. However, we believe that baptism is an important part of a person's faith journey and value the act of baptism as a sign of faith and acceptance of God's grace. It is our intention to nurture people in faith in ways that move them toward baptism, which indicates membership not in this congregation but in the body of Christ. In following Disciples tradition, it is also our intention to accept all forms of baptism. While we practice believer's baptism by immersion, we do not require it.

V. Congregational Government

As a faith community with congregational governance, the management of the affairs of this congregation is vested in the congregation.

A. Meetings

1. Congregational meetings shall be called by the board and presided over by the Moderator. Additionally, upon the request of 20% of the membership of the congregation, the board shall call a congregational meeting.
2. The congregation shall meet at least annually. The date, time and place of the regular annual meeting of the congregation shall be set by the board.
3. Notice of congregational meetings must be given by an announcement made at two regular Sunday services, beginning at least two weeks before the date of the meeting. Written notice of the proposed business must also be mailed to the membership at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting. For purposes of notice, electronic communication shall be the equivalent of postal mail.

B. Congregational vote

1. A congregational vote shall be required on the following matters:
 - a. the calling or releasing of a pastor
 - b. sale or purchase of real property
 - c. congregational indebtedness in excess of 20% of its previous year's operating budget
 - d. revising or amending the bylaws
 - e. revising or amending the Articles of Incorporation
 - f. election of congregational leaders (as listed in this document)
 - g. affiliation/disaffiliation with denominational relationships and structures
 - h. dissolution or merger of the congregation
 - i. divesting of permanent endowment funds
 - j. other matters where the church board deems it necessary.
2. Congregational votes shall be passed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members who are present and voting at the congregational meeting.

C. The operational and financial year of the church shall be the calendar year.

VI. Organization for Ministry

Because it is impractical for the congregation to be involved in each decision about the day-to-day operation of the congregation, the business and ministry of First Christian Church will be a joint effort between five leadership groups:

A. The Board

The church board has as its primary business the overall well-being of the congregation. It is the executive body of the congregation authorized to determine its policies and procedures, and conduct its business.

1. The board shall consist of the following members who will be elected by the congregation: Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary (who are elected for one year each), and three at-large members of the congregation (who are elected for three years each). Additionally, the elders and the trustees shall each choose from their group one person to serve as a member of the board. Staff clergy shall participate in board meetings as ex officio members with a vote.
2. The board shall have the duty to:
 - a. Determine at the beginning of each operational year who will serve on the Ministry Visioning Team and invite people to serve.
 - b. Direct the development of the church's vision and clarification of its mission.
 - c. Communicate with the congregation through both listening and sharing information and ideas.
 - d. Oversee the business of the congregation between congregational meetings.
 - e. Develop and administer a policy manual.
 - f. Approve an annual income and expense budget.
 - g. Adjust the budget to reflect changing ministry needs and financial circumstances.
3. The board shall meet at least four times per year.
4. Special meetings of the board shall be held on the call of the moderator or when requested by three or more board members.
5. A majority of board members shall constitute a quorum.
6. Board decisions are made by consensus or by majority vote at a meeting where a quorum is present.

B. Executive Committee

1. The executive committee consists of the Moderator, Assistant Moderator, and Senior Pastor of the congregation. The executive committee will meet monthly, as mutually scheduled or upon the request of any executive committee member. Its general purpose is to monitor current church business, program planning, and ministry activities, and to carry out board actions which are not otherwise assigned. Executive committee decisions will normally be made by consensus, or by majority vote at a meeting where all executive committee members are present.
2. The executive committee functions as the decision-making body to provide intermediate direction and assistance to the various FCC groups

and for minor or routine matters which do not require formal board action.

3. The executive committee is authorized to provide administrative direction, plan future meetings and events, and respond to unexpected events or needs of FCC which may require immediate decision or action. Other duties may be directed by these bylaws or the board in anticipation of needed future actions. The executive committee may authorize unbudgeted expenses, or a series of related expenditures, according to the policy guidelines. The executive committee will apprise the board of decisions made.

C. Ministry Visioning Team

1. The Ministry Visioning Team shall consist of staff clergy as well as other church staff who have responsibility for program ministry areas within the church. Each year the board shall assess whether additional lay leaders in particular ministry areas should be invited to serve on the Ministry Visioning Team (example: lay leaders with particular gifts for worship or mission & witness ministries). The Ministry Visioning Team members shall be invited to serve by the board and shall serve for one year at a time. The senior pastor shall lead the Ministry Visioning Team unless otherwise agreed between the senior pastor and the board.
2. The Ministry Visioning Team shall have the duty to:
 - a. Do initial planning for the ministries and programs of the congregation including:
 - i. Proposing themes
 - ii. Preparing calendar of known events and seasons
 - iii. Determining potential areas of emphasis for education, mission, etc. to fit with chosen themes
 - b. Work with the Ministry Planning Teams to plan and implement the details of the ministry and programs for the coming year.

D. Ministry Planning Teams

1. The Ministry Planning Teams are groups of lay people who work alongside the Ministry Visioning Team to plan the programs and activities of the congregation including, but not limited to: worship services, faith formation opportunities, mission and service opportunities, congregational events, and ministries for children and youth.
2. Ministry Planning Teams will work for a set amount of time to plan and implement the ministry of the congregation. Generally, there will be three Ministry Planning Teams each year, although this number can change as needed at the direction of the board or request of the Ministry Visioning Team. The three usual teams will be:

- a. Fall/Advent/Christmas: begin work at the beginning of the summer to plan for the period September – December.
 - b. Winter/Lent/Easter: begin work in September to plan for the period January – April.
 - c. Summer: begin work in January to plan for the period May – August.
3. Each Ministry Planning Team will include those who participate in First Christian Church and who want to serve in this capacity.
 4. The Ministry Visioning Team will provide leadership for each Ministry Planning Team.

E. Ministry Support Teams

For the church to run smoothly, it requires the work of many people. In addition to those named above, the following teams will be formed to support the ministry of the congregation:

1. Facilities Team
 - a. This team will plan and lead the congregation in caring for the building and grounds.
 - b. The chair of this team will be chosen annually by the executive committee. Members of this team will serve at the invitation of the chair.
2. Finance Team
 - a. This team will have responsibility for overseeing the day to day finances of the congregation, monitoring of investment funds and other financial assets of the church, sharing financial reports with the board and bringing a proposed budget to the board annually.
 - b. This team will be under the leadership of the Treasurer. This team also consists of the Financial Secretary, Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary, and at least one other member of the congregation who will be invited to serve by the Treasurer.
3. Stewardship Team
 - a. This team will plan and lead the congregation in stewardship including the education and encouragement of generous giving as well as leading the annual stewardship emphasis to support the budget.
 - b. The chair of this team will be chosen annually by the executive committee. Members of this team will serve at the invitation of the chair.
4. Disciples Coordinating Team
 - a. Disciples are all of those who work in serving ministries of the church (such as: preparing and serving communion, collecting offering, assisting with baptisms, and serving communion to

homebound members as well as support for weddings, funerals, and general hospitality and meal functions). This includes but is not limited to ministries previously done by the deacons.

- b. The Disciples Coordinating Team is responsible for coordinating these ministries and ensuring that people (referred to as disciples) are available to serve in them.
- c. The chair of this team will be chosen annually by the executive committee. Members of this team will serve at the invitation of the chair with attention to calling people who have skills in various serving ministries and the ability to train and invite disciples to serve.

5. Personnel Team

- a. The personnel team has responsibility for:
 - i. Interviewing and hiring for non-clergy staff positions.
 - ii. Doing annual reviews for all staff, including clergy.
 - iii. Recommending budget items related to staff, including salary and benefits.
 - iv. Advocating for the relationship between staff and congregation as well as among staff members.
- b. This team is made up of three people chosen by the executive committee. Members of this team will serve three years each with staggered terms.

6. Pastoral Support Team

- a. The Pastoral Support Team exists to cultivate the most fruitful partnership possible between pastor and congregation. They shall support and nurture the pastor and spouse through prayer, friendship, discussion, study, and renewal.
- b. The Pastoral Support Team shall be made up of five members. At the beginning of a new pastorate, the pastor and moderator shall work together to choose three of the members from the search committee and two from the congregation at large to make up this team. Initially, two members from the search committee will serve for one year with the others serving for two years. Moving forward, each member will serve for two years. The committee will choose from its membership a chair. As vacancies arise, the pastor and moderator will consult together to invite new members to serve on the team.
- c. The Pastoral Support Team will meet on a regular basis and may have special meetings as determined by the pastor or members.
- d. Each clergy staff person shall have their own Pastoral Support Team.

7. Nominating Committee

- a. The Nominating Committee, with input from the congregation, will select leaders to fill elected positions.
- b. This team is made up of four people chosen by the executive committee at the beginning of the operational year. Two shall be current board members and two from the congregation at large.

VII. Election of Congregational Leaders

With the recommendation of the Nominating Committee and approval of the board, congregational leaders shall be elected at the annual congregational meeting.

- A. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for nominating people to the following positions:
 1. Moderator who, elected annually, shall call and preside at all regular and special meetings of the board and congregation, and serve as lay leader of the congregation. No individual shall serve more than two consecutive years. A person may be eligible to serve again as moderator after four years.
 2. Assistant Moderator who, elected annually, shall assist the moderator and preside in the moderator's absence. No individual shall serve more than two consecutive years. A person may be eligible to serve again as Assistant Moderator after four years.
 3. Secretary who, elected annually, shall keep minutes of all regular and special meetings of the board and congregation.
 4. Financial Secretary who, elected annually, shall oversee the receipt and recording of all funds, ensure they are deposited in the proper church accounts, ensure individual contribution records are kept and statements sent, and ensure appropriate reports are made regularly to the board and available to the Ministry Visioning and Ministry Planning Teams.
 5. Assistant Financial Secretary who, elected annually, shall assist the Financial Secretary in all duties related to that role.
 6. Treasurer who, elected annually, shall oversee the secure disbursement of properly authorized funds and ensure appropriate reports are made regularly to the board and available to the Ministry Visioning and Ministry Planning Teams.
 7. Assistant Treasurer who, elected annually, shall assist the Treasurer in all duties related to that role.
 8. Trustees who, elected for a three-year term, shall act as the legal agents of the church in all business matters under the direction of the board and subject to the approval of the congregation, handle business transactions related thereto, and perform such other duties as are required by the

laws of the state of Iowa. The trustees shall select among themselves a chair and a representative to the board. There shall be three trustees with terms staggered so one completes a term annually.

9. Elders who, elected for a two-year term, shall assist the Pastor in pastoral leadership of the congregation and serve in ministries according to their gifts. Recognized as leaders in the congregation, they shall strive to lift up and support the congregation as a whole. The elders shall select among themselves a chair and a representative to the board. There shall be six elders with terms staggered so three complete a term annually. No individual shall serve more than two consecutive terms. A person may be eligible to serve again as elder after two years.
 10. At-large board members who, elected for a three-year term, shall serve on the board, attend meetings and offer leadership. These persons should be active in the congregation, represent the diversity of the congregation, and not currently be serving in other leadership roles represented on the board. There shall be three at large board members with terms staggered so one completes a term annually. No individual shall serve more than two consecutive terms. A person may be eligible to serve again as an at-large board member after four years.
- B. A vacancy in any office of the church shall be filled by a replacement proposed by the Nominating Committee and elected by the board until the next annual meeting, at which time a person shall be elected to fill the position for the remainder of the term.

VIII. Clergy

While it is recognized that all members of the body are ministers, it is also recognized that for this body to grow and prosper, the leadership of professional clergy is needed. The term clergy refers to all full or part time pastors, either commissioned or ordained, recognized by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

All staff pastors of First Christian Church shall work in covenant with the congregation and according to their individual job descriptions. The pastors are expected to not only participate in the spiritual life and ministries of this congregation but also in the larger community and denomination as well.

IX. Selection of Clergy for Full or Part Time Service

- A. A representative committee of at least five, nominated by the moderator and assistant moderator, and elected by the board, shall serve as the search

committee and be responsible for recommending a prospective minister to the board. This committee shall represent the diversity of the congregation.

- B. The Senior Pastor will serve on the search committee for all other staff clergy.
- C. The search committee will utilize the services of the denomination for the search process.
- D. It shall be the policy of the congregation that the committee negotiate with only one prospect at a time.
- E. The pastor's package of pay and benefits shall be negotiated between the prospective pastor and the search committee, with input from the board and the finance team. This information shall be part of the presentation to the board when a pastor is recommended. This package shall then be evaluated annually with negotiations between the pastor and the personnel committee.
- F. The board shall consider the recommendation of the search committee. The recommendation must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the total board members. Staff clergy shall not have a vote.
- G. The board shall then take the recommendation of the prospective candidate to the congregation where it must be accepted by a two-thirds vote of the membership who are present and voting at the congregational meeting.

X. Ending of a Clergy/Congregation Relationship

Recognizing that clergy serve congregations as a matter of call, it is acknowledged that the length of a call cannot be predetermined.

A. Ending Initiated by Clergy

- 1. When a clergy person no longer feels called to serve in their current role at First Christian, has accepted a call to another congregation, or is preparing to retire the clergy person shall provide the congregation with sixty (60) days' notice in order to end the call. By mutual consent the sixty (60) day period may be altered.
- 2. It may be appropriate for the term of notice to be extended. The clergy person shall work with the executive committee to determine the appropriate length of notice that should be given to the congregation.

B. Ending Initiated by the Congregation

- 1. The elders, in consultation with the moderator, shall have the sole authority to call for the resignation of clergy. If a situation presents itself that indicates such action, the elders are responsible for working with the appropriate denominational leaders to develop a process that brings unhealthy patterns out in the open and works to

make possible a continued relationship between the congregation and pastor. If, after a reasonable amount of time and effort, such a relationship cannot be continued, the elders may call for the pastor's resignation. The recommendation for the ending of a pastor's ministry shall be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the elders, a two-thirds majority vote of the board and a two-thirds majority vote of the congregation.

2. Should a situation arise in which administrative leave is appropriate, this decision shall be the responsibility of the elders, in consultation with the moderator. Should this occur, they will work with the appropriate denominational leaders to develop a process to move toward either continuation or ending of that pastor's ministry with First Christian.

C. Upon the resignation, termination, or death of a pastor, the moderator and assistant moderator shall appoint a Transitional Steering Committee of five members representative of the congregation. They will seek the counsel of the denominational staff as to: the type of interim pastoral leadership which would be best for the congregation and the candidates available. This committee will interview potential candidates to serve as Transitional Pastor and recommend to the board the candidate they have selected and the terms of call they have worked out with the candidate. The call of the transitional pastor is made by the board. The recommendation must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the total board members. Staff clergy shall not have a vote.

XI. Other Staff

The church should retain the services of those persons required for the functioning of the organization. It is recognized that at times, depending on the needs and abilities of the congregation, more or less personnel may be needed. Positions needed will be determined by the board in consultation with staff clergy, the Ministry Visioning Team and the Ministry Support teams. The policy manual contains all matters relating to these positions.

XII. Scholarship Funds

As funds are made available, the church will offer and administer scholarship funds. The disbursement of the Sunier Scholarship Fund is permanently restricted by the terms of the bequest. Guidelines for this and other scholarship funds, if available, can be found in the policy manual.

XIII. Changes in Bylaws

- A. Every five years, or as needed, the executive Committee shall appoint at least three people to review the bylaws. If they determine changes are necessary, they shall bring proposed changes to the board to approve.
- B. After the board approves changes to the bylaws, they shall go to the congregation for a vote.
- C. Notice of any proposed changes in the bylaws must be given by an announcement made at two regular Sunday services beginning at least two weeks before the date of the meeting which is to consider the proposed change. Written notice of the proposed changes must also be mailed to the membership at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting. The Bylaws can be amended or changed by a two-thirds vote of the members who are present and voting at the annual or special meeting of the congregation. For purposes of notice, electronic communication shall be the equivalent of postal mail.

XIV. Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order, as Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for business meetings of the church, except where explicit provisions in the congregation's Articles of Re-Incorporation or these Bylaws override these rules.

XV. Policy Manual

Recognizing that there are some church guidelines that are temporary or require more frequent updating, a policy manual has been established. The writing and amending of these policies will generally be the responsibility of the ministry group in charge of that area or ministry (for example: the personnel team will ensure that job descriptions and personnel policies are kept up to date). The policies in the manual will be brought to the church board for approval before being added, changed or deleted. The church board shall review the policy manual each year in order to recommend additions, changes or deletions. The policy manual will be structured in such a way that a single policy can be changed without changing the entire manual.

XVI. Dissolution or Merger of Congregation

- A. Should the congregation decide to dissolve, the assets including real property shall be converted into cash and managed by Christian Church Foundation (CCF). The board will propose and congregation approve instructions to be given to CCF

regarding how the assets will be distributed with at least 50% going to organizations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the remainder going to helping agencies with which the congregation has a history.

- B. Should the congregation decide to merge with another congregation and maintain identity as a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the assets of First Christian will become the assets of the merged congregation according to its new bylaws.
- C. Should the congregation decide to disaffiliate with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and affiliate with another denomination or become independent of denominational affiliation, the assets of the church shall be converted to cash and given to the Christian Church Foundation for support of churches or organizations within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- D. The church shall not afford pecuniary gain, incidentally or otherwise to its members. No part of retained earnings of the church shall benefit or be distributed to its members, elders, officers or other private persons.