



The Constitution First Christian Church 1343 National Road Wheeling, WV 26003

PREAMBLE

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 God's covenant of love which binds us to God and to 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.

ARTICLE I. Name and Purpose

Section A. Name

The name of this organization shall be First Christian Church of 1343 National Road, Wheeling, West Virginia, affiliated with the movement known as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Section B. Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be that of servant to our Lord and to the World and to make a witness to our belief as expressed in the preamble.

ARTICLE II. Membership

The membership of this church shall consist of those who are now identified as members of the congregation and those who shall unite with it by baptism or by transfer of membership. In the case of new members or anyone transferring who has not been baptized, the church officials will arrange for such baptism by immersion at a convenient time. Voting privileges shall be limited to all members who are sixteen years of age or older.



ARTICLE III. Church Officers

Section A. Officers to be Elected

1. The following officers shall be elected by the church at its annual business meeting for a term as designated for each, or until such time as a successor is elected and assumes office. Elders and Deacons may be re-elected to the same office only after one year has elapsed, but may be elected to serve a new office without the required one year off. The offices of Trustee, President, President-Elect, Treasurer and Secretary may be filled by a current Elder or Deacon, but is not required.
 - a. Elders: not to exceed twelve (12) in number, one-third of whom shall be elected each year for a term of three years.
 - b. Deacons: not to exceed twelve (12) in number, one-third of whom shall be elected each year for a term of three years.
 - c. Trustees: not to exceed three (3) in number, one-third of whom shall be elected every two years for a term of six years.
 - d. President of the Congregation: Terms shall be for one (1) year—succeeded then by the President-Elect of the Congregation.
 - e. President-Elect of the Congregation: This office shall be nominated and approved at the Annual Congregational Meeting, and will serve a one (1) year term. At the end of said term, the President-Elect shall succeed, and serve, as the President of the Congregation.
 - f. Treasurer: shall be duly elected by the congregation and serve a one (1) year term.
 - g. Secretary: shall be duly elected by the congregation and serve a one (1) year term.
 - h. Terms of all officers who are serving as of July 1, 2018 shall have their term extended by six (6) months. Officers elected in Dec., 2019 shall resume serving a three year term.
2. Honorary Officers: Those who because of infirmities or advanced age, and whose service and consecration to the church merit this honor, may be retired from active responsibility, these to be known respectively for life, as elder emeritus, deacon emeritus, or minister emeritus.



Section B. Duties of Church Officers

1. Eldership—The Eldership offer to the congregation leadership in the form of Teacher, Shepherd, Celebrant and Overseer. Elders shall strive to live into the high and holy calling of an Elder in accordance to their spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and maturity. All Elders serve on the Joint-Mission Council and Discipleship Council
 - 1b. Chair of the Elders—The Chair of the Elders shall be elected among the Elders currently serving. Alongside the rest of the Eldership, he or she serves on the Joint-Mission Council and Discipleship Council. He or she shall also serve on Administrative Council as a representative of the Discipleship Council. He or she shall serve to foster unity in mission and cooperation among the Councils and the congregation.
2. Deaconship—The Deaconship offers to the congregation Servant-Leadership, in the likeness and example of Christ. Deacons shall strive to live into the high and holy calling of a Deacon, providing leadership to the mission opportunities of the congregation in accordance to their spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and maturity. All Deacons shall serve on the Joint-Mission Council and Discipleship Council.
 - 2b. Chair of the Deacons—The Chair of the Deacons shall be elected among the Deacons currently serving. Alongside the Deaconship, he or she will serve on the Joint-Mission Council and the Discipleship Council. He or she shall also serve on the Administrative Council as a representative of the Discipleship Council. He or she shall serve to foster unity in mission and cooperation among the Councils and the congregation.
3. Trustees— shall serve on the Joint-Mission Council & the Administrative Council. They shall act as the legal agents of the church in all business matters, under the direction of the Administrative Council and subject to approval of the Joint-Mission Council and the church. They shall hold legal title to all church property and handle all business transactions related thereto and have supervision over all endowment and trust funds, subject to the direction of the Administrative Council and perform such duties as are required by the laws of the State of West Virginia.
 - 3b. Chair of the Trustees—The chair of the Trustees shall be elected among the current Trustees. Alongside all the Trustees serving on the Joint-Mission Council and Administrative Council, he or she shall also serve on the Discipleship Council as a representative of the Administrative Council. He or she shall serve to foster unity in mission and cooperation among the Councils and the congregation.



4. President of the Congregation—The President shall fulfill the usual duties of the chairperson of a non-profit Board of Directors, call and preside at all regular or special business meetings of all Councils and Congregational Meetings, and provide leadership that shall be a sign of unity and cooperation among all Councils and the congregation.
5. President-Elect of the Congregation—The President-Elect shall serve on all Council and congregational meetings, providing leadership that shall be a sign of unity and cooperation among all Councils and the congregation. He or she shall fulfill the roles and duties of the President of the Congregation in the President's absence.
6. Treasurer—The Treasurer shall account for and disburse all funds of the church, according to the authority designated by the Joint-Mission Council and of the Congregation, serve as a resource for our Stewardship ministry opportunities, and make reports for regular, and called, meetings of Administration Council and Joint-Mission Council meetings, and congregational meetings. The Treasurer shall serve on the Joint-Mission Council and Administrative Council.
7. Secretary—the Secretary shall serve as secretary of the congregation in keeping minutes of all official meetings of the Administrative Council, Joint-Mission Council, and Congregational Meetings. The Secretary shall serve on the Joint-Mission Council and Administrative Council.

Section C. Election of Church Officers

1. A Nominating Committee composed of the elders, and three members of the congregation who are not members of the Joint-Mission Council, shall be appointed by the President of the Congregation and approved by the Administrative Council at least three months prior to the annual business meeting, to nominate candidates for the above officers making up the Joint-Mission Council.
2. The Nominating Committee shall report its nominations to the congregation at the annual business meeting.
3. All nominees who receive a majority of the votes cast by those present and voting, shall be declared elected.
4. Vacancies in any office of the church shall be filled for the unexpired term by nomination of the board of elders, and election by the Administrative Council.



ARTICLE IV. Governance—The Councils

Section A. Membership, Organization & Duties: Joint-Mission Council

Joint-Mission Council (JMC) is a gathering of both the Administrative Council and the Discipleship Council, and manifests itself every December, and as called upon by the President of the Congregation. Responsibilities of the JMC include, but are not limited to:

- Interpreting the Church's Mission & Purpose
- Enhancing the Church's Witness
- Approving Changes to Personnel & the Annual Budget
- Refer to Congregation Vote for matters of: the calling of a Minister; the purchase/sale of real estate; the undertaking of Capital Campaigns; assuming loans that encumber property; approval of Congregational-Wide Mission Priorities

Section B: Membership, Organization & Duties: Administrative Council

Administrative Council (AC) serves with the focus that "Business is our Mission". Individuals serving in positions on the AC are nominated and approved by the Congregation at its Annual Congregational Meeting.

The officers serving the AC include:

President of the Congregation; President-Elect of the Congregation; Treasurer; Secretary; Trustees; Chair of the Elders; Chair of the Deacons; and Ministerial Staff of the Congregation (serving in an ex-officio status)

Responsibilities of the AC include:

- Ensuring Adequate Financial Resources to Equip Discipleship Ministry Opportunities within the Life of the Church
- Receiving & Stewarding Financial Gifts & Bequests
- Protecting & Maintaining Property Assets
- Providing Financial Oversight
- Ensuring the Legal & Ethical Integrity of the Church's Business & Mission
- Equipping Board Competency
- Refer to Joint Mission Council on matters of: the calling of a minister; the purchase/sale of real estate; the undertaking of building projects; assuming loans that encumber property; and matters warranting the wisdom of the whole council.



Section C. Membership, Organization & Duties: Discipleship Council

Discipleship Council (DC) serves with the focus that “Mission is our Business”. Individuals serving in positions on the DC are nominated and approved by the Congregation at its Annual Congregational Meeting. Those officers include:

President of the Congregation; President-Elect of the Congregation; Chair of the Trustees; all Elders; all Deacons; and Ministerial Staff of the Congregation (serving in an ex-officio status)

Responsibilities of the DC include:

- Ensuring Effective Planning, Leadership & Recruitment for Ministry Opportunities
- Evaluating & Strengthening Ministry Opportunities
- Offering Leadership & Oversight for Ministry Groups (i.e., Men’s, Women’s, and Youth groups)
- Guide itself by these Marks of Faithful Congregational Discipleship:
 - 1) Vibrant Worship
 - 2) Congregational Care
 - 3) Educational Formation
 - 4) Faithful Stewardship
 - 5) Witness & Evangelism
 - 6) Local & Global Outreach
 - 7) Equipping for God’s Call
 - 8) Gracious Hospitality
- Refer to Joint Mission Council on matters of: Congregational Ministry Priorities and other matters warranting the wisdom of the whole council.

Section D. Council Quorums and Voting

1. While our congregation values an “open meeting” culture where all are welcome to attend and contribute, only those duly elected members of the respective councils may vote.
2. For any meeting of any of the established Councils, a quorum will be necessary to conduct any official vote. A quorum is established when 50.1% of the Council’s members are in attendance.
3. On the occasions where a member of the congregation serves in multiple positions—
 - a. for the purpose of a quorum, shall be counted toward the quorum for each position they hold.
 - b. For the purpose of voting, shall have only one vote.

Section E. Ordering of Meetings

1. The Administrative Council and Joint Mission Council shall conduct itself in a professional manner and guide itself by Roberts Rules of Order. Approved official minutes of the Administrative Council and Joint Mission Council shall serve as binding documents for matters relating to the business life of the church.



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2. The Discipleship Council shall conduct itself in a faithful and cooperative manner. The purpose of this gathering shall be for the edification in matters of theological significance within leadership, the evaluation of current ministry opportunities, and the visioning of and providing leadership for future potential ministry opportunities. The nature of this meeting shall be prayerful, collaborative, and mission-focused.

Section F. Authority

1. Subject to direction by the church, the authority of the church shall repose in the respective councils as named above, except with reference to the items listed below, and the Joint-Mission Council shall have full and final control over all administrative and mission-based decisions and organizations within the church. In the following matters, final action shall be taken only by congregational vote:
 - a. the calling of a Minister;
 - b. the purchase/sale of real estate;
 - c. the undertaking of Capital Campaigns;
 - d. assuming loans that encumber property;
 - e. approval of Congregational-Wide Mission Priorities
2. The Joint-Mission Council may submit other matters to the congregation for action as it deems necessary.

ARTICLE V. The Minister

Section A. Duties

1. The senior minister of the church shall perform the duties which usually pertain to that office, and as spiritual administrator of the church, he (she) shall be an ex-officio member of all organized councils, groups, auxiliaries, committees, and departments.
2. The associate minister shall work under the direction of the Senior Minister, or in his (her) absence, under the direction of the Administrative Council.

Section B. Selection

The minister(s) shall be chosen by the church as follows:



1. A broadly representative committee of seven (7) nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Joint-Mission Council, shall serve as pulpit committee and be responsible for recommending a prospective minister to the Joint-Mission Council. The pulpit committee will elect its own chairperson.
2. The Joint-Mission Council shall consider the recommendations of the pulpit committee and, if approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members of the board, recommend the prospective minister to the church. It shall be the policy to have the congregation consider only one prospective minister at a time.
3. The recommendation of the Joint-Mission Council to the Congregation must be accepted by at least two-thirds majority of members present and voting in a regular or special business meeting of the church before a call may be extended.
4. The term of the ministry shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated by either party upon ninety (90) days' notice. A written statement setting forth salary to be paid and other conditions of the call shall be made in triplicate; one copy for the minister, one for the church, and one for the Regional church.
5. The resignation of the minister shall be dealt with as follows:
 - a. Voluntary resignation of the Minister shall be submitted to the Joint-Mission Council in writing after consultation with the President of the congregation and the elders.
 - b. Involuntary resignation of the minister shall be dealt with confidentiality between the minister, the President of the congregation, the Elders, and the regional Executive Minister.
 - c. The Joint-Mission Council shall approve the resignation, voluntary or involuntary, of the minister by at least two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members of the board and recommend approval to the congregation.
 - d. The congregation, in a stated or called meeting, shall take final action in approving or disapproving the involuntary resignation of the minister.

ARTICLE VI. Congregational Meetings

Section A. Meetings to be Held

The Church shall hold:

1. An annual business meeting for the election of officers shall be held on the **on the first Sunday of December.**



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2. Special meetings of the membership of the congregation as required, such meetings to be called by the President of the Congregation upon request of the majority of The Joint-Mission Council, or written petition of 75 or more members of the church.
3. Items of business brought before the membership of the congregation shall be decided by a simple majority of the members present and voting.

Section B. Notice

1. Notice of all regular or special business meetings of the congregation shall be given at a regular Sunday service of the church at least twice in advance of the meeting.

Section C. Rules of Order

1. All business meetings of the congregation shall be guided by the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order.

ARTICLE VII. Amendments

This constitution may be emended at any business meeting of the church by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting on the amendment, provided notice of the proposed amendment has been announced during worship and made available through electronic communiques, with at least two weeks' notice of the meeting.

BY-LAWS

- I. **The church program year and church financial year shall begin on January 1st.**
- II. The Meetings of the Councils shall be:
 - A. Joint-Mission Council shall meet in December, and as called upon by the President of the Congregation
 - B. The Administrative Council will meet: February, June, October & as called upon by the President of the Congregation
 - C. The Discipleship Council will meet: January, May, September & as called upon by the President of the Congregation



- III. The procedure governing employment of staff other than the minister(s) shall be as follows:
 - A. Employees shall be secured upon recommendation of the Administrative Council. The Administrative Council shall execute the employment or release of such employees, and shall refer to Joint-Mission Council matters deemed necessary.
 - B. Final authority in all such matters shall reside with the Joint-Mission Council
 - C. Employment shall be by two-thirds vote of members present and voting. Employees are responsible to the Administrative Council
 - D. A contract covering terms of employment shall be maintained on file and a copy given to the employee.
- IV. These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members of the Administrative Board, provided the proposed amendment has been submitted to the membership of the board at least fifteen (15) days prior to the vote.