

**BYLAWS**  
**First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
**of Hagerstown, Maryland**

**Presented to the Congregation for approval November 17, 2019**  
**to take effect on July 1, 2020**

**Article I. Name, Organization, and Purpose**

**Name and organization.** The First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Hagerstown, Maryland (“the Church”) is chartered by the State of Maryland as a nonprofit corporation (ID #D00101469) and is affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

**Purpose.** The purpose of the Church is to be the body of Christ by witnessing through our Christian actions to all people based on principles of the Bible; nurturing spiritual growth through worship, Christian education and fellowship; developing an atmosphere that promotes open communication through teamwork, leadership, and stewardship among all members; promoting a church family atmosphere through love and support in times of joy and sorrow; providing outreach in our community, region, and the world; and spreading the Good News of God’s love and care for all.

**Article II. The Congregation**

**The Membership** of this Congregation, as part of the whole family of God on earth, includes the following: those who are now members of the congregation; those who unite with it by confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, giving expression of their faith through Christian discipleship and baptism; those who unite by transfer of membership, thereby reaffirming their faith and commitment to Christ.

**Congregational authority.** The Congregation holds ultimate authority to manage its affairs under the Lordship of Jesus Christ; to organize and carry out the mission and witness of the congregation; to establish its budgets and financial policies; to call its ministers; and to participate, through voting representatives, in regional and general assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Congregation also exercises and enjoys all other rights, privileges, and responsibilities requisite or appropriate to carrying out its purpose.

The Congregation reserves to itself the following powers:

- To call a new Senior Minister
- To call a new Associate Minister
- To approve the operating budget
- To amend these bylaws

The congregation's responsibilities include:

- To support the mission, values, and goals of the congregation along with the witness of the whole Church; proclaim the gospel; administer baptism and the Lord's Supper; and provide for the spiritual nurture of its members.
- To grow in understanding that the church is a universal fellowship, and to transcend all barriers within the human family.
- To be faithful in Christian stewardship, striving to share proportionately in providing resources for the total life, work, and witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- To realize the oneness of the church of Jesus Christ through cooperation with other churches of the community.
- To sustain its ministers in faithfulness and honor.

**Congregational meetings** will be held annually and at other times when called by the Leadership Board. The Leadership Board must call a congregational meeting when requested to do so in writing by at least fifteen percent (15%) of the members of the Congregation.

Notice of all annual and special congregational meetings must be announced at a regular Sunday morning worship service of the congregation at least two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting, through scheduled church publications, and by electronic mail. Each notice must indicate the purpose, date, time, and place of the meeting.

**Quorum and voting.** Those members of the Congregation who attend a properly called congregational meeting constitute a quorum. Except as otherwise indicated in these Bylaws, actions are adopted by a majority of members present and voting. No form of voting *in absentia* or by proxy is allowed.

### **Article III. Leadership Board**

The **Leadership Board** is responsible to the Congregation. Its duties include engaging members of the Congregation in discernment about mission and vision, creating strategic plans and goals, and working in partnership with the Senior Minister to ensure that Church resources are properly and effectively used for the fulfillment of its mission. The Leadership Board may adopt written Policies consistent with these Bylaws to regulate the work of the Church.

**Members** of the Leadership Board are the Officers (Moderator, Vice-moderator, Secretary, and Treasurer) and one (1) Member-at-Large elected by the Congregation; one representative elected by the Elders Committee; and one representative elected by the Trustees. All Leadership Board members are elected for two-year terms. The Senior Minister serves *ex officio* without vote.

- The Moderator plans and chairs meetings of the Congregation and Leadership Board.

- The Vice Moderator chairs the Nominating Committee, serves as Acting Moderator when the Moderator is unable to serve, and performs such other duties as the Moderator or Leadership Board may assign.
- The Secretary keeps accurate minutes of all meetings of the Congregation and Leadership Board and ensures that those minutes are properly approved and filed.
- The Treasurer ensures that the Board is informed about the finances of the Church, and assists the board in its oversight function, including the annual audit or review. The Treasurer chairs the Finance Committee.
- Member-at-large of the Leadership Board perform such additional duties as the Moderator or Leadership Board may assign.
- Elders representative appointed by the Elders Committee.
- Trustee representative appointed by the Trustees.

**Quorum.** A majority of the voting members of the Leadership Board constitutes a quorum.

**Removal from Office.** The Leadership Board may remove any member of the Leadership Board or any Committee for Misconduct, Breach of Covenant, or Moral Turpitude after due process as defined in the written policies of the Leadership Board.

#### **Article IV. Committees**

**Committees.** The Leadership Board has oversight of all Committees. The Powers and duties of all Committees are defined in the Leadership Board policies.

The Congregation elects members of the following Committees:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Total serving</b>	<b>Elected per yr</b>	<b>Term (years)</b>
Elders Committee	8-12	4-6	2
Trustees	7	1-2	5
Personnel Committee	3	1	3
Personnel Committee will select two additional members of the Personnel Committee.			
Nominating Committee	2	1	2

The Nominating Committee has the following additional members:

- Vice Moderator, ex officio, serving as chair
- Senior Minister, ex officio without vote
- One member of the Church staff appointed by the Senior Minister, without vote

The Leadership Board may create and appoint other Committees. The Powers and duties of all Committees are defined in the Leadership Board policies.

## **Article V. Elections**

**Election process.** The Nominating Committee distributes nomination forms to the congregation, interviews potential nominees, confirms their eligibility, and provides them with a written list of the duties, obligations, and responsibilities of the office. No one may be nominated who has not agreed to serve if elected.

At least one month prior to the Annual Meeting, the Nominating Committee must inform the Leadership Board of its slate of nominees and make copies available to the congregation. At the Annual Meeting, the Nominating Committee presents its slate for election. No nominations from the floor are allowed, and no ballots.

**Qualifications for Office.** Elected Offices are open to any member of the congregation who meets the following criteria:

- Must attend worship regularly.
- Must embrace, pledge, and give freely to support the annual budget of the church.
- Must have and maintain a positive relationship with staff, clergy, and lay leadership of the congregation.
- Must agree to abide by the Leadership Board Covenant and all other policies and procedures of the congregation.
- Must be approved for elected service by the Senior Minister.

With the exception of the Treasurer, no Officer may be elected to a third consecutive term in the same position until at least one (1) year has passed.

Elected Officers of the Congregation may not also serve as paid members of the Church Staff.

## **Article VI. Senior Minister**

**Senior Minister.** The Senior Minister serves as the chief spiritual, administrative, and programmatic leader of the church, responsible for overseeing church activities and supervising all church staff. The Senior Minister is a non-voting member of the Leadership Board and of all Committees.

The Senior Minister shares with the Moderator responsibility for encouraging orderly procedures in the life and work of the congregation and for ensuring compliance with these Bylaws and with policies and procedures of the Congregation and Leadership Board.

**Selection of a Senior Minister.** In order to ensure a successful Search and Call process, the following policies and procedures shall be observed:

1. Within 30 days of receipt of the Senior Minister's resignation, the Moderator shall appoint a Search and Call Committee, which must be confirmed by at least a three-fourths (3/4) majority the Leadership Board. It shall be composed of seven (7) persons representative of the

congregation, but shall include at least two (2) Elders, one (1) member of the Leadership Board, and one (1) member of the Personnel Committee. All members of the Search and Call Committee must meet all the criteria of Eligibility to Serve as Elected Leadership as defined in this policy except the approval of the Senior Minister. The Moderator may consult with church staff or lay leadership to determine if a prospective Search and Call Committee member is eligible to serve. Once established, the Search and Call Committee will select its own chair who will serve as the primary point of contact with the Regional Minister, the congregation, and prospective Senior Minister candidates.

2. The Search and Call Committee shall utilize the services of the Regional Minister or other appropriate denominational official for information and counsel concerning the Search and Call process and the consideration of prospective candidates.
3. The Search and Call Committee shall adopt and maintain the Ethical Guidelines for Congregational Conduct provided by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Office of Search and Call.
4. The Search and Call Committee shall complete a Congregational Profile, as provided by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Office of Search and Call, seeking guidance from the Regional Minister or other appropriate denominational official as well as the input and support of church staff and membership of the congregation.
5. The Search and Call Committee shall work with the Personnel Committee to develop a job description and a Letter of Call for the prospective Senior Minister.
6. The Search and Call Committee shall provide regular updates on their progress to the Leadership Board without revealing any specific or personal information about prospective Senior Minister candidates under consideration.
7. The Search and Call Committee shall review ministerial profiles provided by the Regional Minister, conduct interviews, and contact the references for candidates prior to beginning to negotiate a Letter of Call. When a top candidate has been identified, the Search and Call Committee will negotiate the Letter of Call with the prospective Senior Minister and may seek the input and guidance of church leadership in confidentiality as required for negotiating purposes.
8. If the Search and Call Committee wishes to consider a prospective Senior Minister who does not have a ministerial profile in circulation with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Office of Search and Call, they may request that the Regional Minister reach out to that candidate and report to the Committee on that candidate's interest and qualifications for the position. The Search and Call Committee should consider candidates who

have or are eligible to obtain standing with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

9. The Search and Call Committee shall recommend one prospective Senior Minister to the Leadership Board, together with a proposed Letter of Call setting forth the compensation for the Senior Minister and the other conditions of the call.
10. The Leadership Board, at a stated or called meeting, must approve the recommendation of the Search and Call Committee by at least a three-fourths (3/4) majority of those board members present and voting. Upon approval, the Leadership Board shall recommend employment of the prospective Senior Minister to the congregation.
11. The congregation, in a stated or called meeting, must approve the recommendation of the Leadership Board by at least a three-fourths (3/4) majority of those members present and voting.
12. Upon approval of the congregation, the Chair of the Search and Call Committee shall notify the prospective Senior Minister, on behalf of the congregation.
13. Once the Letter of Call has been completed and signed by all parties, one copy shall be sent to Office of Search and Call, one copy shall be sent to the Regional Minister, one copy shall be retained in the Senior Minister's personnel file, and the original shall be returned to the Senior Minister.
14. The Search and Call Committee shall act as the Pastoral Relations Committee for the first six (6) months of the Senior Minister's tenure, after which the Committee shall disband.

**Dismissal.** The Leadership Board may recommend dismissal of the Senior Minister by a two-thirds (2/3) vote. Final action to dismiss a Senior Minister is by a majority vote of the Congregation by written ballot. The Leadership Board may dismiss an Interim Senior Minister by a majority vote.

**Succession Planning.** When the position of Senior Minister is or is expected to be vacant due to the Senior Minister's resignation, retirement, termination, or incapacitation, the following policies and procedures are established to ensure continuity of clergy leadership and the orderly selection of a new Senior Minister.

**Retirement.** If the Senior Minister intends to retire, she or he may inform the Leadership Board in writing up to but not more than one year prior to the intended date of retirement. This is suggested, but not required, and does not supersede the terms of employment established in the Senior Minister's Letter of Call. It is a courtesy to the congregation to allow the Leadership Board more time to prepare for the transition of clergy leadership. In the event of a clergy retirement announced more than sixty days in advance, the timetable for the search and call process detailed in this policy may be adjusted with the consent of the Leadership Board.

**Resignation.** The Senior Minister shall notify the Leadership Board of his or her resignation in writing, typically sixty days prior to the last day of service, or as otherwise stated in the Senior Minister's Letter of Call.

**Interim Senior Clergy.** In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), it is typical for congregations to hire an Interim Senior Minister to serve the church temporarily until a new Senior Minister is hired.

**Selection of an Interim Senior Minister.** It is the responsibility of the Leadership Board, in consultation with the Regional Minister or other appropriate denominational official, to select an Interim Senior Minister. The Leadership Board shall establish a job description, determine the minimum qualifications, receive ministerial profiles, conduct interviews, check references, negotiate the terms of employment, and recommend a final candidate for the approval of the congregation.

**Interim Minister Term of Service.** An Interim Senior Minister may serve the congregation on an as-needed basis, until the Search and Call process is complete and a new Senior Minister is in place. In some cases, such as the resignation or retirement of a long-tenured Senior Minister, the termination of a Senior Minister, or during a time of open conflict, the congregation may wish to hire an Interim Senior Minister for a pre-determined period of time, typically 1–2 years. When the Leadership Board becomes aware of the immediate or impending departure of the Senior Minister, the Leadership Board, in consultation with the Regional Minister or other appropriate denominational official, will determine whether to hire an Interim Senior Minister on an as-needed basis or for a pre-determined length of time. An Interim Senior Minister is not eligible to immediately succeed him or herself as Senior Minister and must not be involved in the Search and Call process except by the invitation of the Search and Call Committee.

**Other Interim Ministry.** The Leadership Board may elect to hire an Interim Senior Minister when the Senior Minister is going to be absent from service for a definite period, such as a sabbatical, or for an indefinite period such as a prolonged illness. In such cases, the Leadership Board will follow the procedures for Selection of an Interim Senior Minister above, also consulting the current Senior Minister for guidance in the process.

## **Article VII. General Provisions**

**Parliamentary Authority.** The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* govern in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the Church may adopt.

**Amendments.** These Bylaws may be amended at a congregational meeting by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the members present and voting on the amendment. Notice of the text of proposed amendments must be included in the notice of the meeting where a vote will be taken.

**Dissolution.** In the event that First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Hagerstown, MD, should terminate its ministry or cease to be affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the real estate and tangible assets of the Permanent Fund, Ministry Funds (operating budget, Disciple Ministries, Worship, Outreach, Children & Youth, and Property) and all restricted accounts/funds shall be transferred to the Christian Church Foundation, Inc., of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada with designated income being equally distributed to Disciples Mission Fund, Capital Region, and Week of Compassion.

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We, the Congregation of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Hagerstown, Maryland, in faithful response to the will and purpose of God as revealed through Jesus Christ and God's continuing revelation in the world, do hereby adopt these bylaws on this **17th day of November, 2019**, to become effective on the **first day of July, 2020**.