

**First Christian Church** (*Disciples of Christ*)  
**Guthrie, Oklahoma**  
**(Revised 2024)**

**CONSTITUTION**  
**Preamble**

We, as members of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Guthrie, Oklahoma in faithful response to the will and purposes of God as revealed through Jesus Christ and God's continuing revelation in the world and in accordance with the Charter and Articles of Incorporation, filed April 16, 1892 and recorded in the office of Secretary of State, Oklahoma State Capitol Building, in the state of Oklahoma, do hereby adopt this constitution and by-laws for the congregationally-governed body to conduct the business and property of this congregation, this 1st day of July, 1983.

**ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this congregation shall be the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Guthrie, Oklahoma, affiliated with and an integral part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and shall hereinafter be referred to as congregation.

**ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this congregation is to establish and maintain a church for religious activity; to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in faithful response to God's will and purposes as revealed through Jesus Christ and in the world; to seek in all persons a faith and commitment to Jesus Christ; to serve the community of which it is a part; to bring the gospel message to bear upon society, which shall be of a purely beneficent character; to work cooperatively with Christians in other communions; to acquire property, real and personal, as may be necessary for carrying out the general purposes above declared; to borrow money and pledge the property of the congregation to secure the repayment thereof; and to buy, sell or otherwise deal in property in order to promote or accomplish the objectives for which the congregation is organized.

**ARTICLE III. PLACE OF WORSHIP**

The congregation shall meet and conduct all of its business at 402 East Noble, Guthrie, Oklahoma, or such other place as may be designated by the board.

**ARTICLE IV. DURATION**

The duration of this congregation is to be perpetual.

**ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of this congregation, as a part of the whole family of God on earth, shall consist of the following:

A. Those who are now members of the congregation.

- B. Those who shall unite with it by confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, giving expression of their faith through baptism, by immersion, and commitment to Him.
- C. Those who unite by transfer of membership, thereby reaffirming their faith and commitment to Christ. We are an open membership congregation and welcome persons from other church traditions who have been baptized in some manner.

**ARTICLE VI. RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONGREGATION**

The congregation shall manage its affairs under the Lordship of Jesus Christ; determine its faithfulness to the gospel with respect to the basis of membership; own, control and encumber its property; organize and carry out the mission and witness of the congregation; establish its budgets and financial policies; call its ministers and other staff; and participate, through voting representatives, in regional and general assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in forming the corporate judgments of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The congregation shall demonstrate voluntarily its mutual concern for nurture, mission and witness of the whole Church, and, among other responsibilities, it shall: proclaim the gospel; administer baptism and the Lord's Supper; provide for the spiritual nurture of its members; grow in understanding that the Church is a universal fellowship; transcend all barriers within the human family such as race and culture; be faithful in Christian stewardship, striving to share proportionately in providing resources for the total life, work and witness of this congregation; choose voting representatives to the general and regional assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); and seek to realize the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ through cooperation with other churches of the community and with present and emerging ecumenical structures.

The congregation shall sustain its ministers in faithfulness and honor, and in matters pertaining to relationships with the ministers seek counsel from the Executive Regional Minister.

The congregation shall exercise and enjoy all other rights, privileges and responsibilities requisite or appropriate to carrying out its purpose.

**ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS, BOARD, ELDERS, DIACONATE, JUNIOR DIACONATE, TRUSTEES, CABINET, DEPARTMENTS**

**A. Officers**

The congregation shall elect from its members a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer. These officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the congregation and shall serve as officers of the congregation and the board and cabinet as set forth in the bylaws.

**B. Board**

The congregation shall have a board that shall be responsible to the congregation and have authority to act on behalf of the congregation when it is not in a congregational meeting. The board shall be composed of members as set forth in the bylaws and for terms of office therein stated. The board shall be responsible for receiving reports from its ministers, officers and various departments or other organizations within the congregation. It shall establish by its

action the program and budget of the congregation, subject to action by the congregation at its annual meeting.

**C. Trustees, Elders, Deacons, and Junior Deacons,**

The congregation shall have trustees, elders, deacons, and junior deacons. Their election, qualifications and responsibilities shall be as set forth in the bylaws.

**D. Cabinet**

The congregation shall have a cabinet which shall be responsible for coordinating the program and work of the congregation and generally assisting the board and ministers in administering the same. It may also initiate programs and shall be composed of such members as set forth in the bylaws.

**E. Departments and Committees**

The congregation through its board, shall establish departments, standing committees and other organizations necessary for the conduct of the work of the congregation as set forth in the bylaws.

**ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended at any congregational meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting on the amendment, provided written notice of the proposed amendment has been sent through the mail to all members of the congregation at least ten days prior to the time the vote is to be taken, or the proposed amendment has been read at or following two successive Sunday morning worship services immediately prior to the time the vote is taken.

# **FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, GUTHRIE, OKLAHOMA**

## **BYLAWS**

### **(Amended 2024)**

#### **I. BOARD**

##### **A. Membership**

1. Membership of the board shall be composed of the officers of the congregation, elders, deacons, junior deacons, trustees, chairmen of the departments, and honorary officers. The ministers and other employed church staff may serve only as ex-officio members of the board.

##### **B. Responsibilities**

1. In keeping with the traditions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the ultimate authority of the congregation shall rest with the congregation. All organizations within the congregation shall be responsible to and report regularly to the board and through it to the congregation.
2. The board shall perform its duties according to the authority granted in the constitution and bylaws or otherwise delegated to it by the congregation; shall consider and recommend to the congregation general policies; and direct the administration of the program of the congregation.
3. Stated meetings of the board shall be held at least 3 times each year to conduct business, approve the budget, and approve nominations. Meetings shall be called to order upon determination of a quorum to be defined as 15 members of the board. Special meetings of the board shall be called by the chairman of the board or the vice-chairman of the board in the absence of the chairman of the board, upon written request of the ministers or ten members of the board. Notice of special meetings shall be made by telephone, text, or email to all board members and by announcement at a Sunday morning worship service at least one week in advance of the meeting, and by means of the church newsletter, or by mail and postmarked at least three days before such a meeting. The purpose, date, time and place of the meeting shall be indicated in each notice. The board may permit any or all board members to participate in a regular or special meeting by, or conduct the meeting through the use of any means of communication by which all members of the board participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. A board member participating in a meeting by this means shall be deemed to be present in person at the meeting. Any action required to be taken, or which may be taken, at a meeting, may be taken without a meeting and without prior notice if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, is approved by no less than 15 members of the board with respect to the subject matter of the vote. In the event of national disaster and/or loss of property, emergency decisions may be made by consensus of pastor, board chair and elder chair or vice chairs if chairs are not available.
4. All meetings of the congregation and the board shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order (Revised), except that all voting in the meetings of the congregation and the board shall be by open vote, unless three or more request a secret vote or ballot, which shall then be mandatory.
5. The board in the transaction of business shall take into full account the responsibility of the congregation to the total nurture, witness and mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the needs of the immediate community in which the members of the congregation live.

6. The board shall be responsible for conducting the business affairs of the congregation and providing for the planning, coordination, researching, evaluation and implementation of the work and activities of the congregation.
7. Upon receiving and approving an acceptable proposed budget from the Stewardship Department, the board shall present the budget to the Congregation for final approval.
8. The board shall seek advice and recommendations from, consider reports from, and cooperate with the following departments: Worship, Stewardship, Christian Education, Outreach, and Property Departments. Additionally the following standing committees shall be established: Personnel, Pastoral Relations, Scholarship, and Memorial.
9. The board may establish special departments, auxiliary organizations or committees as needed. Standing committee policies and/or procedures shall be established by the board.
10. The board shall receive regular reports from all departments, auxiliary organizations and committees and from other organizations of the congregation and shall act upon such reports with approval as presented, approval with modification, disapproval, or referral back to the submitting body.

## **II. OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

### **A. Election and Term of Office**

1. At its annual meeting, the congregation shall elect the following officers for one-year terms:
  - a. Chairman of the congregation, who shall also serve as chairman of the board and as vice-chairman of the cabinet.
  - b. Vice-chairman of the congregation, who shall also serve as vice-chairman of the board and as chairman of the cabinet.
  - c. Secretary of the congregation, who shall also serve as clerk of the board and the cabinet.
  - d. Treasurer of the congregation.

### **B. Qualifications**

1. Officers must be members of the congregation and must be active in the congregation's life and give evidence of seeking to grow in their own understanding, and practice of the Christian life. Such evidence would include the following:
  - a. Conduct of one's life in light of the teachings of Jesus Christ.
  - b. Promotion of good will and Christian fellowship in the congregation and community.
  - c. Attendance at the worship services and stated meetings of the congregation.
  - d. Regular financial contributions to the support of the congregation and its outreach programs.
  - e. Willingness to fulfill assignments on behalf of the congregation.
  - f. Demonstrated skills or evident potential in carrying out responsibilities of the particular office.

### **C. Responsibilities**

1. The Chairman shall preside at all stated and special called meetings of the

- congregation, and of the board; and perform such other duties normally associated with the office of chairman.
2. The Vice-Chairman shall serve to support the chairman; preside in his or her absence at meetings of the congregation and board; serve as chairman of the cabinet; and perform such other duties normally associated with the office of vice-chairman.
  3. The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation, board, and cabinet; provide for these minutes to be reviewed and approved by their respective bodies; keep the board informed of membership statistics and perform other such duties as may be assigned by the board.
  4. The Treasurer shall receive all income of the congregation and depositing same in the proper accounts; pay all accounts of the congregation as authorized by approved, or special action of the board when such items are not in the budget; provide accurate records of all expenditures; make regular written reports to the board; provide for an annual audit of both income and expenditures for action by the board and congregation. The treasurer shall be bonded in the amount of \$5,000 at the congregation's expense and shall serve on and under the direction of the stewardship department. The board may request an audit or review of financial records at any time.
  5. The board may request an audit or review of financial records at any time.

#### **D. Honorary Officers**

1. Appointment
  - a. An Elder Emeritus is nominated by the Elders and presented to the board for approval. The presentation of the office should be made at a meeting of the congregation if possible.
  - b. A Diaconate Emeritus is nominated by the diaconate and presented to the board for approval. The presentation of the office should be made at a meeting of the congregation if possible.
2. Qualifications
  - a. The position of Elder Emeritus and Deacon Emeritus is reserved for those who have unselfishly served the congregation in an exemplary manner.
3. Responsibilities
  - a. These positions are honorary and carry no responsibilities.

### **III. CABINET**

#### **A. Membership and Meetings**

1. The cabinet shall consist of the chairman, vice-chairman and secretary of the congregation, the ministers, the chairmen of the departments [I.B.6.], the chair of the elders, chair of the diaconate, and such other persons as may be appointed by the board.

#### **B. Responsibilities**

1. The cabinet shall consider, initiate and coordinate the activities and programs of the congregation in keeping with the policies as determined by the board.

#### **IV. TRUSTEES, ELDERS, DEACONS AND JUNIOR DEACONS**

##### **A. Qualification**

1. The qualification shall be the same as described for officers of the congregation set forth in Article II, B.

##### **B. Election and Term of Office**

1. There shall be a minimum of twelve elders, 36 members of the diaconate, and three trustees, one-third of each of whom shall be elected for a term of three years at the annual meeting of the congregation. Additional member of each serving group may be appointed by a vote of board based on the needs of the church.
2. The junior diaconate shall consist of 12 members and shall be elected for a one-year term at the annual meeting of the congregation.

##### **C. Responsibilities**

1. The trustees, elders, deacons and junior deacons shall promote the growth and welfare of the congregation in cooperation with each other and with all departments and committees.
2. At the direction of the board, the trustees shall:
  - a. hold title to the property of the congregation in their name;
  - b. act as legal agent for all endowment and trust funds and for all other matters relating to the business of the board and congregation
  - c. perform such other duties as may be required by the laws of the State of Oklahoma.
3. The elders shall:
  - a. be responsible for the spiritual life and development of the congregation,
  - b. preside at the Lord's Table,
  - c. assist and share with the minister in the conduct of his or her pastoral and priestly functions and
  - d. provide supportive counsel for the minister regarding the spiritual life and development of the congregation, and
  - e. provide communion to nursing home residents and congregational members who are hospitalized or home bound.
  - f. perform such other duties as may be assigned by the board.
3. The diaconate shall:
  - a. be responsible for the maintenance and growth of the congregation through its individual members and corporate life in witness in the community and in the world,
  - b. prepare and distribute the Lord's Supper
  - c. receive the offering
  - d. coordinate transportation for those needing rides to church functions, and
  - e. perform such other duties as may be assigned by the board.
4. The junior diaconate shall serve the congregation as ability and training permit, by assisting in regular and special services as called upon.

## **V. MINISTERS**

### **A. Responsibilities of Senior Minister**

1. The senior minister of the congregation shall be the chief administrator of the congregation, and, under the direction of the chairman of the congregation and the board, encourage orderly procedures in the life and work of the congregation in compliance with the congregation's constitution and bylaws and the policies and procedures of the congregation and the board.
2. The senior minister shall give special attention to and advice upon the selection and training of the congregation's leaders.
3. The senior minister shall be an ex-officio member, without vote, of all boards, committees, departments, constituency groups and other groups of the congregation.

### **B. Responsibilities of other ministers**

1. The responsibilities of other ministers shall be outlined in individual job descriptions and under the supervision of assigned departments and the senior minister.

### **C. Selection of Ministers**

1. The senior minister and other ministers shall be chosen by the congregation, as hereinafter described:
  - a. The chairman of the board shall appoint seven congregational members to serve on a Search Committee. Such committee shall be representative of the congregation and shall be approved by the board.
  - b. The Search Committee shall conduct the selection process and forward their recommendation to the board for consideration.
  - c. The board, at a stated or called meeting, shall approve the recommendation of the Search Committee by at least two-thirds majority vote. Upon approval, the board shall recommend employment of the prospective minister to the congregation.
  - d. The congregation, in a stated or called meeting, shall approve the recommendation of the board by at least a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.
  - e. Upon approval of the congregation, a call shall be extended to the prospective minister by the board, on behalf of the congregation.
  - f. If the recommendation is not approved by the congregation, the Search Committee shall continue the selection process by seeking another candidate.

### **D. Terms of Employment**

1. An agreement of employment setting forth the salary other compensation and any conditions of the call shall be offered by the board and accepted by the ministerial candidate.
2. The term of ministry shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated upon 60 days written notice by either party.
3. Yearly evaluation of the ministers will be conducted.

### **E. Resignation**

1. Voluntary resignation of a minister shall be submitted to the board in writing, after consultation with the chairman of the board and the elders.

2. Involuntary resignation of a minister shall be dealt with confidentially between the minister, the chairman of the board, and the elders.
3. The board shall approve the resignation of a minister by at least a two-thirds majority vote, and recommend approval to the congregation.
4. The congregation, in a stated or called meeting, shall approve the resignation of the minister by at least a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting.

## **VI. NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

### **A. Membership**

1. A nominating committee of one elder and two deacons whose terms do not expire at the end of the current year, and two members of the congregation who are not members of the board shall be appointed by the chairman and approved by the board.

### **B. Responsibilities**

1. It shall be the duty of this committee, in counsel with the senior minister, to nominate individuals for the following positions: trustees, elders, deacons, junior deacons, officers of the congregation, chairmen of departments, Scholarship Committee members, Pastoral Relations Committee members, and other ad hoc committees as necessary.
2. The nominating committee shall consider advance recommendations for nominees by the members of the congregation, providing recommendations are given to the committee at least three weeks before the slate is presented to the board.
3. The nominating committee shall consider qualifications of all potential nominees in the light of the principles of qualifications set forth in Article II, Section B. After securing consent from the nominees, the committee will prepare a slate consisting of one name for each office for consideration by the board. Individuals whose terms are expiring are not to be submitted, except where a person has served less than two years of an unexpired term, or in the instance of a deacon being promoted to the office of elder.
4. After the slate is approved by the board, the board chair shall present the approved slate to the congregation at the annual meeting, and all nominees who receive a majority of the votes cast of those present and voting shall be declared elected.
5. Vacancies in any position of the congregation shall be filled for the unexpired term by nomination of the nominating committee made to and elected by a majority vote of the board.

## **VII. DEPARTMENTS AND COMMITTEES**

### **A. Membership**

1. The nominating committee, in consultation with the board chair and with the approval of the board, shall select chairmen of the departments, special departments, auxiliary organizations and committees.
2. The chairmen shall select the other members of their respective departments.
3. Committee members shall meet the qualifications set forth in Article II, Section B.

## **B. Responsibilities**

1. Each department study its purpose, organization, duties and responsibilities as established and outlined by written guidelines approved by the board.
2. Each department will plan its programs and meet regularly to fulfill its responsibilities and objectives.
3. Reports shall be made to the board on a regular basis for consideration and action.
4. Upon the approval of and under the direction of the board, each department shall proceed with its program in cooperation with other departments and the congregation.

## **VIII. EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF**

- A. The procedure governing employment of staff shall be as follows:
  1. Employees other than ministerial staff shall be employed as follows: The board shall designate the proper department to work in cooperation with the personnel committee to make recommendations regarding the employment or release of employees as necessary. In making such recommendation, the respective department shall collaborate with the senior minister.
  2. Final authority in all such matters shall reside with the board.
  3. Employment shall be by a two-thirds vote of the board, and all employees shall be responsible to the board, in consultation with the proper department.
  4. All staff members shall work under the supervision of the senior minister.
  5. Complaints by or regarding staff members should be registered with the Pastoral Relations Committee and/or the chairman of the responsible department.

## **IX. AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be amended at any congregational meeting by a majority of the members present and voting on the amendment, provided written notice of the proposed amendment has been sent through the mail to all members of the congregation at least ten days prior to the time the vote is to be taken, or the proposed amendment has been read at two or following two successive Sunday morning worship services immediately prior to the time the vote is taken.