

CONSTITUTION of THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) OF HIRAM, OHIO

Preamble

We, the members of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Hiram, Ohio, a congregationally governed body, in order to promote the work of the church in the spirit of Christ and thus advance His Realm, do hereby adopt this constitution which supersedes all previous constitutions, by-laws and operating procedures.

ARTICLE I. Name, Registered Office, Incorporation:

- Section 1. The legal and denominational name of this church is The First Christian Church of Hiram, Ohio, affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); the local and historical name of this church, being one and the same church and congregation, is Hiram Christian Church.
- Section 2. The registered office of this church is located at 6868 Wakefield Road in the Village of Hiram, Portage County, Box 937, Hiram, Ohio 44234.
- Section 3. The First Christian Church of Hiram, Ohio, is a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio.

Article II. Purpose: The purpose of the Hiram Christian Church is to serve as a Christian community of faith of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and to support the regional and general ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Article III. Membership:

- Section 1. Membership in this church is broadly extended to all individuals who choose to engage in the life and ministries of this congregation. Membership is extended through baptism, statement of faith, transfer of membership or acceptance of invitation.
- Section 1A: Associate membership shall be available to any person who is maintaining a membership with another church.
- Section 2. Voting rights are afforded all members. If an instance arises where the validity of membership is called into question, the membership of an individual may be determined by the board officers.
- Section 3. Membership will be recorded by the secretary of the church and listed in the annual report of the year it was initiated. The Pastor or designated ministry team will make the secretary aware of new members. Membership information will be collected for all members.
- Section 4. The members of the congregation will:
- Be faithful in stewardship, striving to share in providing resources for the life, work and witness of the local, regional and general ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
  - Call its Pastor and staff, and with them participate in the ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
  - Own, control and encumber its property, establish its budget and financial policies as deemed necessary to carry out its mission as determined by its members.
  - Exercise and enjoy all other rights, privileges and responsibilities deemed necessary to carry out its purpose.

Article IV. Board Officers:

- Moderator
- Vice-moderator
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Financial Secretary

Article V. Amendments to this Constitution: This constitution may be amended at the annual business meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment is first approved by the Church board and written notice of the proposed amendment has been published by the church at least ten days prior to the vote and made public in worship on the two Sundays prior to the day the vote is taken.

## HIRAM CHRISTIAN CHURCH BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – Church Year

The Church year runs from January 1- December 31

ARTICLE II – Congregational Meetings

Section 1. An annual meeting is to be held each year during the month of November to receive and vote upon reports from the Board and Ministry Teams.

Section 2. Special congregational meetings as required will be called by either the moderator, vice-moderator, upon request of the board, or upon written petition of fifteen (15) or more members of the Church.

Section 3. Notice of the annual congregational meeting or any special congregational meetings must be published by the church at least ten days prior to the vote and made public in worship on the two Sundays prior to the day of the meeting.

Section 4. Business at all congregational meetings may be transacted by a quorum of twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the number of the average worship attendance from the previous year's denominational Year Book.

Section 5. Annual reports of all officers and all committees will be submitted at least three weeks ahead of the annual congregational meeting and made accessible to the congregation at least ten (10) days ahead of the annual meeting.

Section 6. All business meetings of the congregation shall be governed by a system determined by the presiding board and votes will be decided by a majority 2/3<sup>rds</sup> vote.

ARTICLE III – The Board

Section 1. Hiram Christian Church will have a Board of 13-17 individuals, including the pastor (ex-officio); the Director of Little Village (ex-officio); five board officers; a chair-person from each ministry team, a representative from Elders and Diaconate, and two members at large from the church and community including Hiram College

Section 2. The Board will recommend any new ministry teams and descriptions and responsibilities for each ministry team for a vote by the congregation on an annual basis. Current ministry teams may also be terminated by a vote of the congregation at the annual meeting.

Section 3. All Board Members, except officers, are elected to three year, non-renewable terms, unless their ministry team is dissolved prior to their fulfilling their term.

Section 4. The Board meets at least 6 times a year and functions as the administrative body for the Church. It performs the following functions

- Facilitates the setting of goals and the development of mission and vision
- Develops and oversees policies and procedures
- Assumes responsibility for finances, budgeting, and fundraising
- Implements and oversees employment policies, staff reviews and compensation, and legal issues

- Represents the church in contractual relations with choir director, organist, secretary and custodial services.
- Encourages and supports ministry teams as they freely engage within established guidelines.

Section 5. The composition of the Board should be reflective of the demographics of our community and seek to be roughly one third individuals aged under 35, one third 35-55, and one third 56+.

Section 6. The Board will decide any votes with a 2/3<sup>rds</sup> majority. 50% of the membership of the Board is considered a quorum to conduct business. Business meetings of the Board shall be governed by a system determined by the presiding Board. Votes that cannot be determined by the board should be determined by a vote at a congregational meeting.

Section 7. All Board members will be asked to sign a "Covenant of Ministry", written and maintained by the board, for each year they serve.

#### ARTICLE IV – Nomination and Election of Board Members

Section 1. A committee appointed by the Board and chaired by the Vice Moderator in consultation with the minister will be tasked to prepare a slate of one or more candidates for the various board positions, gain consent from the candidates, inform the candidates of all duties and responsibilities of the office or Chair, and make a preliminary report to the Board for possible suggestions before bringing nominations to the congregation.

Section 2. The membership of the nominating committee should be made known to members of the congregation and should publicly elicit suggestions for potential candidates for all open positions.

Section 3. The congregation will be asked to vote on Board candidates at the annual congregational meeting.

#### ARTICLE V – Board Officers

Section 1: Board Officers include the moderator, vice moderator, treasurer, financial secretary and secretary.

Section 2: Officers serve renewable, one year terms, for up to three consecutive years in the same office.

Section 3: Board officers serve as legal trustees of the church.

#### ARTICLE VI – Duties of Officers

Section 1. The Moderator:

- Is the presiding officer of the Board and the chief officer and a legal trustee of the church
- Calls and leads all regular or special business meetings of the congregation and Board
- Sets agendas for Board meetings (in consultation with the pastor). Ensures that financial and other reports are prepared and available for meetings; sets meeting place and time and gives notice to all board members, and follows up on agenda items from previous meetings.
- Communicates regularly with Ministry Team Leaders regarding their work
- Facilitates an annual review of all church staff, including goals and recommendations regarding compensation, approved by the board

#### Section 2. The Vice-Moderator:

- Serves in the role of Moderator in the absence of the Moderator or in the circumstance that the Moderator resigns or is unable to perform the duties of the position
- Leads an annual nominating committee to nominate new board members and officers.
- In consultation with the minister, appoints a Pastoral Relations team consisting of 2-3 members of the congregation
- Monitors progress on all reaching, equipping, empowering and serving strategies

#### Section 3. The Secretary:

- Keeps minutes of all business meetings of the congregation and Board
- Ensures any action items decided at the annual meeting are included on the board's agenda for the year
- Maintains all legal documents of the congregation and records of all reports,( including financial reports) and sends a copy of the Congregation's annual report to DOC historical society
- Works with the pastor and church secretary to develop an annual report
- Maintains permanent file of annual reports

#### Section 4. The Financial Secretary:

- Receives all income including interest, dividends, and memorial funds, and makes records of all funds and deposits them in the proper accounts
- Keeps an individual record of each known contributor; sends out statements to contributors twice a year.
- Prepares a report for each regular meeting of the Board.
- Presents a projected annual report at the congregational meeting, to be finalized in January and published in the February newsletter.
- Monitors investment accounts with the Treasurer
- Arranges for preparation of annual tax statements of giving
- Works with board members to develop an annual plan for income and works with board members to develop a plan to express gratitude to all contributors

#### Section 5. The Treasurer:

- Keeps all financial accounts according to authority designated by the Board
- Pays all accounts of the congregation as authorized by the budget or special action of the Board when items are not in the budget
- Provides accurate records of all expenditures
- Prepares a report at each regular meeting of the Board
- Presents a projected annual report at the congregational meeting, to be finalized in January and published in the February newsletter.
- Pays all accrued bills, and/or signs and monitors all checks written
- Works with board members to develop an annual plan of spending subject to approval by the congregation. Works with the financial secretary to monitor investment accounts
- Arranges for an outside audit when there is a pastoral change or every five (5) years, whichever comes first.

## ARTICLE VII – Spiritual Leaders

### Section 1. Elders

The Elders, in cooperation with all Ministry Teams, shall:

- Promote the growth and welfare of the Church
- Give spiritual oversight to the members; compassionate care for the sick
- Give thoughtful consideration to the policies of the Church that will enable it to fulfill its complete mission
- Encourage by example and work, the missionary, evangelistic, educational and stewardship responsibilities of the Church
- Give assistance in greeting members, friends, and particularly guests at the services of the Church
- Perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board.
- Elders may preside at the Communion Table, offer a call to giving the offering or ensure that someone is chosen to do so.
- In the absence or illness of the minister, the Elders, after consulting with the Worship Team and the Moderator of the Board, shall be responsible for Sunday worship.
- The Pastor and existing Elders will work together to identify potential Elders to serve an indefinite term

### Section 2. Deacons:

- The Deacons shall, in cooperation with the Elders and ministry teams, promote the growth and welfare of the Church
- Assist in greeting and ushering the worshipers
- Be responsible for preparing and distributing the Lord's Supper and receiving the offering
- Assist during the baptismal ceremony in preparing candidates for baptism
- Minister to families in times of sickness or bereavement
- Perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board.
- Deacons serve 1 year, renewable terms.

Section 3: Elders and Deacons may be designated as Honored or Emeritus when they prefer to no longer serve on an active basis. They can also be nominated for such an honor, recognizing years of exemplary service to the congregation.

## ARTICLE VIII – Ministry Teams

Section 1. Ministry teams implement the broad ministries of the church within established guidelines set by the board and approved by the congregation. Ministry teams share the responsibility of helping to facilitate maintenance of facilities, fundraising, and media/social media with the board. For example, teams might form around ministries such as:

- **Spiritual Formation:** Coordinates Christian education, youth programming, and College, men's, women's and family programs
- **Worship:** visioning and helping to plan worship and involving and engaging individuals in worship, including communion, offerings, music, choir, coffee hour, etc...
- **Hospitality:** Hosts groups whenever building is in use; coordinates community, funeral and Church dinners; facilitates community activities such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July; pays attention to home bound members, and coordinates greeters for Sunday morning worship

- Prophetic Witness: Facilitates environmental stewardship, community service, social justice programs and special offerings on these topics; collaborates on mission projects with other congregations within the area, i.e. Xplor
- Stewards: Coordinate planning, oversight and care for property and grounds, memorial gifts, equipment purchases, and insurance, in order to maintain facilities that meet the needs of congregation and community.

Section 2. The board, working with the individual ministry team leaders, will be responsible for recruiting individuals to participate on ministry teams.

Section 3. Ministry teams are individually composed of a team leader, an assistant team leader, and additional members determined by the needs of the team and the interests of congregational members.

#### ARTICLE IX – Staff

Section 1. Any changes to staff positions (adding new staff positions or discontinuing current positions) are to be recommended by the board and voted on by the congregation at a congregational meeting.

Section 2. Staff descriptions, hiring processes (other than that of the Senior Minister), termination of staff members, etc. are determined by the Board or a committee appointed by the board.

Section 3. Written statements covering terms of employment for staff (excluding minister) shall be included in the Board minutes. Copies shall be given to employees and to the treasurer.

#### ARTICLE X – Pastor

##### Section 1. Pastor's role

- The pastor shall be the chief administrator of the congregation. He or she shall cooperate with the Moderator, the Board, and the Staff in working with the congregation in a fullness of ministry that includes pastoral, priestly, prophetic and administrative roles in compliance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the congregation.
- He or she is an ex-officio member of the Board and may participate on any/all ministry teams.

##### Section 2. The Selection of a Pastor

- A representative Pastoral search committee of not fewer than five (5) members nominated by the Moderator and elected by the Board, shall serve and be responsible for recommending a prospective Pastor to the Board.
- The Pastoral search committee shall utilize the services of the Regional Minister for information and counsel regarding prospective candidates.
- The Pastoral search committee will recommend a search strategy to the Board for approval with the understanding that it is the committee's responsibility to recommend a candidate to become the new Pastor.
- The Board shall consider the recommended candidate and if approved, shall recommend the candidate to the congregation.

- The candidate must be accepted by at least a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting by written ballot at a regular or legally called special business meeting of the congregation.
- Upon approval of the congregation, a call shall be extended to the newly selected Pastor by the Board on behalf of the congregation.
- The called Pastor must have, or be actively pursuing, ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

### Section 3. Terms of Employment

- The Pastor's Terms of Employment will be prepared by a committee appointed by the Board, and presented to the Board for approval.
- On approval of the congregation, the Board will contract with the called Pastor.
- The term of ministry shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated by either party upon at least thirty (30) days written notice.

### Article XI - Interim Ministry

Section 1. In the event of resignation or termination of a Pastor, a ministry team will be appointed by the Moderator and approved by the Board to select a trained Interim Minister to guide the congregation thru the transitional period. They will work in consultation with the Regional Minister or designated entity from the Regional Office

- The moderator and Elders will ensure that the needs of the congregation are met until an Interim Minister is hired
- The Interim Minister will have standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Section 2. During a Pastor's Sabbatical time, the Elders and Moderator will determine the need for a substitute Pastor to serve the congregation. If such need is determined, a compensation contract will be prepared and a substitute approved by the Board.

Section 3. In case of long term illness or disability on the part of the Pastor, the Moderator and Elders will determine how best to meet the needs of the congregation and present a decision to the Board for approval.

- The Moderator will contact the Regional Office to inform them of the illness and ask for assistance in determining the next steps of the congregation.

### ARTICLE XII – Amendment of the By-Laws

The By-Laws may be amended at the annual business meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment(s) is first approved by the Church board and written notice of the proposed amendment(s) has been published in the church publication(s) at least ten days prior to the vote and made public in worship on the two Sundays prior to the day the vote is taken.

Adopted by the Board December 11, 2016

Adopted by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting on January 22, 2017