

Bylaws of Central Christian Church of Austin, Texas Disciples of Christ

Adopted on November 18, 2018

The purpose of the bylaws is to provide operational and organizational details of the Church that are not included in the Constitution. A set of bylaws shall be maintained by the administrative council to assist with the governance and ministries of the Church. The bylaws may not supersede or circumvent the Constitution.

SECTION ONE: Congregational Assembly

A congregational assembly is a formal congregational meeting of the Church membership to conduct the business of the Church. There will be at least one regular congregational assembly held each year in November or December to approve the annual budget and to elect servant leaders and administrative council positions.

- (1) Additional congregational assemblies can be called by the chair of the administrative council at the request of the administrative council or upon receipt of a written petition signed by at least twenty-five members of the congregation.
- (2) Notification of congregational assemblies must occur verbally and through acceptable church written communication. Verbal notice of all congregational assemblies shall be announced during Sunday morning worship services for at least two consecutive Sundays prior to the called assembly. Written notice of congregational assemblies and the agenda of the assembly must be given to all members of the congregation at least ten days before the time the assembly is to be held. The weekly update and email are considered acceptable forms of written notification.

Subsection A: Voting

All votes occurring during a congregational assembly, unless otherwise stated in the Bylaws, will be a simple majority.

- (1) Before any vote can commence, roll must be taken and any person who previously voted absentee must verify their absentee ballot or re-vote in person.
- (2) The administrative council will appoint an election judge to oversee the counting and verification of all ballots and absentee ballots. The election judge will report all ballot totals to the administrative council for congregational notification.
- (3) A member of the congregation may participate in the vote either in person, or through an absentee ballot process, as defined in Subsection B.

Subsection B: Absentee Ballots

Any member of the congregation may submit an absentee ballot to any vote called for a congregational assembly.

- (1) A member of the congregation will submit through mail, signed letter (delivered through another member or in person), or email their completed official ballot to a designee determined by the administrative council.

39 (2) All absentee ballots must be received the day before the called vote. Absentee Ballots may be
40 submitted no more than 10 days before the called congregational vote.

41 **SECTION TWO: Calendar and Church Communication**

42 A church calendar shall be made available to all members through the Church’s website. The Church
43 fiscal year and administrative year will be based on a calendar year, January 1 through December 31.

44 Common church communication methods shall be defined as the weekly bulletin, email, mail, or
45 announcement at a regular Sunday service.

46 **SECTION THREE: Servant Leaders**

47 (1) Trustees: The trustees shall act as the legal agents of the Church in all business matters,
48 under the direction of the administrative council and subject to the approval of the
49 congregation; hold legal title to all Church property and handle all business transactions
50 related thereto; have supervision over all endowment and trust funds; and perform such
51 duties as are required by the laws of the State of Texas.

52 (a) There shall be five trustees elected by the congregation to serve staggered three-
53 year terms.

54 (b) The trustees will elect a chair of the trustees each year. No person may serve as
55 chair of the trustees for more than three consecutive years. The administrative
56 council may approve a chair to remain in place for longer than a three-year
57 consecutive term if deemed necessary.

58 (c) If there is a trustee vacancy the administrative council is authorized to fill the
59 vacancy until the next regular congregational assembly, where an election can be
60 held according to the nomination and election processes.

61 (2) Elders: Striving to maintain a spirit of unity within the Church. in partnership with the
62 called minister(s) of the Church, the elders will be primarily responsible for the spiritual life
63 and development of the congregation. Elders must be men and women of mature faith and
64 spiritual insight. Additional responsibilities of an elder include: serving at the Lord's table,
65 praying in both public and private settings, visiting the sick and the bereaved, serving
66 communion to those that cannot attend church services, being faithful in financial
67 stewardship, and actively support the Church by serving on committees.

68 (a) The congregation, with guidance and advice from the administrative council, will
69 determine the number of Elders required to ensure all elder duties are
70 maintained.

71 (b) The term of office for an elder shall be for three years with, as nearly as practical,
72 one third of the elders elected each year.

73 (c) If there is an elder vacancy, the administrative council is authorized to fill the
74 vacancy with a person that was previously elected as an elder of the Church. Any
75 individual that fills a vacancy will go through the nomination process and be
76 formally elected through a congressional assembly vote at the next congressional
77 assembly to which an election can occur according to the nominee and election
78 processes.

79 (d) The elders will elect a chair of the elders each year. No person may serve as chair
80 of the elders for more than three consecutive years. The administrative council

81 may approve a chair to remain in place for longer than a three-year consecutive
82 term if deemed necessary.

83 (3) Deacons: Both men and women will work to help support the elders in promoting the
84 growth and welfare of the Church. Additionally, the deacons shall assist in the greeting and
85 ushering of the worshipers; take responsibility for the preparation and care of the
86 communion service; distribute the lord's supper and receive the offerings; assist in financial
87 canvasses, visitation projects, and preparation of candidates for baptism; actively support the
88 Church by serving on committees; cooperate in ministering to the needy; and perform other
89 duties as needed.

90 (a) The congregation, with guidance and advice from the administrative council will
91 determine the number of deacons elected to serve. The term of office for a
92 deacon shall be for three years with, as nearly as practical, one third of the
93 deacons elected each year.

94 (b) If there is a vacancy the administrative council is authorized to fill the vacancy
95 until the next congressional assembly where an election can take place according
96 to the nomination and election processes.

97 (c) The deacons will elect two co-chairs each administrative year. The administrative
98 council may approve a chair to remain in place for longer than a three-year
99 consecutive term if deemed necessary.

100 (d) At no time may a person serve concurrently as a deacon and as an elder.

101 (4) Junior Deacons: There shall be an inclusive number of junior deacons that consist of Church
102 members age 14 to 18. As it is deemed appropriate for each individual junior deacon, a
103 junior deacon may assist with the preparation and care of the communion service; assist in
104 the greeting and ushering of the worshipers; and distribute the Lord's Supper and receive the
105 offerings.

106 (a) The administrative council shall appoint all junior deacons. The chair or co-
107 chairs of the deacons will be responsible for training and leading the junior
108 deacons.

109 **SECTION FOUR: Administrative Council**

110 The purpose of the administrative council is to oversee the business of the Church on behalf of the
111 congregation and is empowered to make necessary decisions on behalf of the Church between
112 congregational assemblies. The administrative council is composed of twelve members which
113 include four (4) executive officers, four (4) servant leader chairs, and four (4) at-large members.

114 (1) The administrative council will meet no less than six (6) times each year but will convene as
115 many times as deemed necessary by the chair to carry out the business of the Church.

116 (2) Notice of the time and location of all meetings shall be posted within the bulletin and on
117 the Church calendar.

118 (3) A quorum must be present for any official action to take place.

119 (a) Seven members of the administrative council must be present or attending
120 through an electronic format to establish a quorum.

121 (4) Meetings are considered open meetings and may be observed by any member of the
122 Congregation. All votes and formal actions must occur in an open meeting. A simple

- majority vote will determine matters that bind the church legally or any matter requiring an endorsement by a church officer or minister (i.e. the hiring of staff).
- (5) The administrative council may enter executive session or “closed meeting” to discuss personnel and sensitive matters. An executive session or “closed meeting” is attended by only the voting members of the administrative council in a private setting.
 - (6) A vote on any matter can be made in person, using an acceptable electronic tool, or through a written proxy.
 - (7) Emergency matters may be determined without an administrative council vote if the Chair of the administrative council, Senior Minister, and Trustees of the Church, unanimously agree on both that the matter qualifies as an emergency and how it may be resolved.
 - (8) The administrative council may form relationship with auxiliary organization in order to further the purpose of the Church. These organization include, but not limited Christian Women's Fellowship, Chalice Group Women's Ministry and Disciples' Men. The purpose and responsibility of each of these groups shall be outlined in its own constitution, by-laws, or plan of procedure. These organizations shall cooperate with the functional teams of this Church, not only in planning and administering the total program of this Church, but also in developing their individual programs in the best interest of the total program.
 - (9) The administrative council will appoint all junior deacons of the church. The number of junior deacons will be decided by the administrative council.

Subsection A: Executive Officers

- (1) Chair: shall call and preside at all regular or called congregational assemblies, all meetings of the administrative council and fulfill the other usual duties of such an officer. Other duties include but are not limited to the appointment of chair(s) and members to various committees, programs, and/or departments of the Church.
- (2) Vice Chair: in the absence of the chair, shall call and preside at all regular or called congregational assembly, all meetings of the administrative council, and fulfill the other usual duties of such an officer. Other duties include but are not limited to serving on the pastoral relations committee.
- (3) Treasurer: shall oversee recording of individual contribution records for each contribution; sending out of giving statements as directed by the administrative council; oversee disbursing of all funds of the Church according to the authority delegated to him/her by the administrative council; oversee recording and reporting of all funds making sure funds are deposited into the proper Church bank accounts; oversee reconciling in a timely manner of all bank accounts monthly; and present a regular report at each meeting of the administrative council and an annual fiscal year report to the congregation. A fiscal report of the previous fiscal year will be given to the congregation no later than February 15 of each fiscal year. The Church weekly update and email are considered acceptable forms of delivery of the fiscal report. The treasurer may appoint one or more co-treasurers to assist with the duties of treasurer. The administrative council must approve all co-treasurer appointments. The treasurer shall also serve and recruit other members of the congregation to serve on the stewardship and finance committee.
- (4) Secretary: shall keep minutes of all regular and special called congregational assemblies, all meetings of the administrative council, ensure an accurate list of members is maintained and fulfill the other usual duties of such an officer. Other duties include sending out request for

167 agenda items, preparing the administrative council agenda, and preparing the minutes and
168 sending to all participants of the administrative council monthly meeting.

169 Subsection C: Servant Leader Chairs

170 The Servant Leader Chairs will consist of four people: the chair of the trustees; the chair of the
171 elders; the co-chairs of the deacons.

172 (1) If one of these chairs is also an elected executive officer or an at-large member, the servant
173 leader group will designate an additional member of their servant leader group to be part of
174 the administrative council.

175 (2) If a servant leader chair is unable to attend an administrative council meeting, the servant
176 leader chair may designate a member of their prospective servant leader group to attend a
177 meeting of the administrative council as a proxy.

178 Subsection D: At-Large Members

179 Each year the congregation will elect four members of the congregation to serve as at-large
180 members of the administrative council.

181 (1) The executive officers of the administrative council will assign each at-large member as ex-
182 officio member of two or more committees or programs of the church.

183 (2) Each at-large member will act as an area coordinator and will be the liaison between the
184 activities of the Church and the administrative council.

185 SECTION FIVE: Ministers

186 Every minister of the church, whether called or sponsored, commissioned, licensed or ordained,
187 shall remain familiar with and conform to the Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church
188 (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

189 Subsection A: Called Ministers

190 The called ministers of the Church shall perform the duties which usually pertain to that office, and
191 as spiritual and administrative advisers of the Church, they shall be ex-officio members of all
192 organized groups and will have no voting privileges in these groups.

193 (1) The term of called ministerial service shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated
194 by either party upon ninety days' written notice.

195 (2) A written statement setting forth the salary to be paid and other conditions of the call shall
196 be made in triplicate, one copy for the minister, one for the Church, and one for the regional
197 office.

198 (3) All called ministers of this Church must maintain good standing with the Christian Church
199 (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest.

200 (a) If a minister loses standing, for any reason, the called ministerial service of the
201 minister will be immediately terminated.

202 (4) If there are multiple Called Ministers, one will be designated as the senior minister.

203 (5) This section may not be changed by contract or any other agreement (verbal or written).

204 Subsection B: Sponsored, Commissioned, Licensed or Ordained Ministers

205 The Church recognizes that commissioned or licensed ministry and ordained ministry are offices in
206 the order of ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada

207 and that both have full standing as ministers in our denomination. It is an honor and a blessing for
208 the Church to sponsor suitable candidates for ministry.

209 (1) Guidelines for sponsorship of a candidate for ministry:

- 210 (a) Any member in good standing may apply to the senior minister for sponsorship
211 for ministerial commissioning, licensing or ordination. If approved by the senior
212 minister the applicant shall then be considered by the pastoral relations
213 committee. Final consideration and approval will be given by the administrative
214 council.
- 215 (b) The terms "commissioned", "licensing", "license" and "ordination" shall have the
216 meanings intended by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United
217 States and Canada.
- 218 (c) The administrative council may suspend or terminate sponsorship for
219 commissioning, licensing, or ordination at any time and for any reason.
- 220 (d) Mere sponsorship for commissioning, licensing or ordination does not constitute
221 an offer to hire or a call to a paid ministerial position.
- 222 (e) Any ordained minister who maintains membership in the Church but is not
223 called to a paid ministerial position by this congregation has no obligation
224 beyond that of any other member in terms of accountability to the senior
225 minister or the pastoral relations committee.
- 226 (f) Any sponsored commissioned or licensed minister shall be accountable to the
227 senior minister. However, in individual cases the senior minister may delegate
228 this duty to another minister that has standing as a minister in the Christian
229 Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

230 Subsection C: Duties of Ministers

- 231 (1) The ministerial field or specialty of the sponsored commissioned or licensed minister shall
232 be assigned by the senior minister. The senior minister and other supervisory ministers shall
233 report the status and activities of the sponsored commissioned or licensed ministers to the
234 pastoral relations committee as often as the committee shall direct. The pastoral relations
235 committee may require personal appearance by the sponsored commissioned or licensed
236 minister.
- 237 (2) The senior minister and the pastoral relations committee, acting together, may, at any time,
238 excuse a sponsored commissioned or licensed minister from accountability, subject to
239 endorsement by the administrative council.

240 SECTION SIX: Standing and Ad Hoc Committees

241 All committees, whether standing or ad hoc, will work to support the mission and vision of the
242 Church. Chairs of each committee will report on-going activities and actions to the administrative
243 chair, or their designee, and report such information at administrative council meetings and
244 congregation when deemed appropriate. Any event a standing or ad hoc committee sponsor must be
245 included in the congregational calendar.

246 Subsection A: Standing Committees

247 Each committee is tasked with administering the programs of the Church and shall organize itself to
248 conduct the business for which it is responsible, meet regularly to attend to its business, and plan its

249 general programs. The administrative council chair, or their designee, shall appoint all chairs and
250 designate their appropriate size and make-up, unless said membership is already outlined within the
251 bylaws. Any appointments of membership to a committee by a committee chair shall be in
252 consultation with the administrative council chair, or their designee, unless otherwise specified.
253 Regular reports shall be made to the administrative council and each committee will consult with the
254 Treasurer on future budgets. All committee meetings are open to members of the congregation.
255 Additionally, as appropriate, each committee shall communicate with the congregation through
256 common church communications.

257 Standing Committees include:

- 258 (1) Christian Education: the committee shall develop an effective program of religious education for
259 the entire constituency of the Church in keeping with the general objectives of Christian
260 education. The committee shall be responsible for planning and administering the total
261 educational program of the Church, including Church school, youth activities, educational
262 projects, leadership education, and distribution of Christian literature and fostering Christian
263 home life.
- 264 (2) Christian Outreach and Service: the committee shall create and present to the administrative
265 council for approval a vision of outreach and service for the Church.
- 266 (a) Through a program of study and action, an outreach program for the Church
267 will be created within the community.
- 268 (b) This committee shall plan and promote a program of missionary and outreach
269 education; enlisting support for missions and causes of the Christian Church
270 (Disciples of Christ); Caring for local and general benevolent needs not
271 otherwise provided for; Promoting conventions, conferences, and retreats;
272 Recruiting and supporting life-work recruits; and keeping records of all
273 missionary giving and action in the Church.
- 274 (3) Evangelism and Membership: the committee will work to attract and retain church members by
275 cultivating an evangelistic spirit within the church. The committee will plan and coordinate the
276 evangelistic program to maintain contact with church membership to encourage all members to
277 be a part of the life of the Church. Keep a record of vital statistics as births, deaths, baptisms,
278 and weddings. Shall gather and preserve data pertaining to the history, life and work of the
279 Church; make available any historical materials authorized by the Church and present to the
280 congregation the annual historical statements.
- 281 (4) Nominations: will be tasked with the organization and execution of the nomination process for
282 elected positions of the Church on behalf of the congregation.
- 283 (a) The membership of the committee will consist of a minimum of one deacon,
284 one elder, one trustee, and one at-large member from the congregation, not
285 currently serving as an officer. These members will be appointed by the chair of
286 the administrative council and confirmed by the administrative council.
- 287 (b) This committee will explain the detailed duties and responsibilities to potential
288 nominees and secure acceptance of nomination.
- 289 1. This will include understanding that any nominee, if elected, will serve to
290 fulfill all requirements of the role.

- 291 2. The committee may use an evaluation mechanism to evaluate active
292 members for leadership roles. Any evaluation mechanism shall be created
293 in consultation with the administrative council and ministers of the
294 Church.
- 295 (5) Pastoral Relations: shall work to maintain a fruitful relationship between all ministers and the
296 congregation. The committee will function as the official method for providing review and
297 congregational regulation to any minister within the Church.
- 298 (a) The chair of the administrative council, vice chair, an elder, a deacon and at large
299 AC member as appointed by the AC shall make up the committee.
- 300 (b) The Chair of the administrative council shall act as the chairperson for the
301 committee.
- 302 (c) The committee shall have such jurisdiction and purview as the committee deems
303 necessary within the boundaries of the constitution, the bylaws, any employment
304 contracts, as may exist, any job descriptions, as may exist and any policy
305 guidelines, as may be promulgated by the current administrative council.
- 306 (d) This committee will meet at least once every two months to give guidance and
307 encouragement to the Church ministers. Each year, the committee will review
308 and revise, as appropriate, any job descriptions. Any revision requires a simple-
309 majority approval from the administrative council.
- 310 (e) The employee handbook will be the written guidelines for all compensated
311 personnel of the Church. In coordination with the personnel committee, the
312 pastoral relations committee will ensure the employee handbook be kept current
313 and up-to-date to the Church's wishes, state and federal law.
- 314 (f) The committee will observe proper and legal procedures to ensure appropriate
315 confidentiality.
- 316 (6) The Personnel committee shall be the management function for all staff members of the church
317 except the Church ministers.
- 318 (a) The committee shall consist of three members appointed by the administrative
319 council. The senior minister will be an active non-voting member.
- 320 (b) This committee shall meet on a regular basis and report to the administrative
321 council.
- 322 (c) Duties of the committee shall include creating and reviewing job descriptions for
323 staff positions; identify hierarchy; review staff performance; establish goals for
324 the upcoming year; and provide technical support to the administrative council
325 for hiring new staff. In addition, this committee will recommend salary
326 increases and/or disciplinary action for staff to the administrative council.
- 327 (d) The committee will work in coordination with the Pastoral Relations committee
328 to ensure the employee handbook is current and updated.
- 329 (e) The committee will observe proper and legal procedures to ensure appropriate
330 confidentiality
- 331 (7) Property and Building Use: this committee, in consultation with the trustees, shall care for all
332 properties of the Church and for keeping all property and equipment in proper condition.

- 333 (a) in coordination with the Senior Minister, the committee will study the needs and
334 make recommendations for improvements, supervising the oversight of the
335 custodial care of the facility and caring for the grounds.
- 336 (b) This committee is responsible for updating the Church calendar with any
337 building events and rentals that are scheduled by the committee chair, not
338 including weddings. And will oversee physical access to the building by this
339 Church and any group that uses the facilities of the Church.
- 340 (8) Social and Fellowship: The committee shall promote social activities which foster a spirit of
341 fellowship and love within the congregation. The committee will work in cooperation with other
342 groups in the Church to accomplish this purpose.
- 343 (9) Stewardship and Finance: The committee shall develop within the membership an
344 understanding of the full meaning of Christian stewardship and so direct the financial program
345 of the Church.
- 346 (a) This committee shall be responsible for keeping alive in the congregation the
347 realization of its stewardship education, supervising the preparation and
348 subscribing of the Church budget, providing for an annual audit of the records,
349 and encouraging financial help for future development in the church and its
350 outreach.
- 351 (b) An independent auditor who is not a member of the church leadership shall
352 perform the annual audit.
- 353 (10) Worship and Music: The committee shall lead the congregation in a genuine experience of
354 worship in public services and to enrich personal and family devotional life.
- 355 (a) In cooperation with the minister(s), musicians, elders, and deacons, the
356 committee shall be responsible for the public worship of the Church; the
357 administration of Baptism; the Lord's Supper (Communion); music; special
358 prayer and worship services; and the encouragement of the devotional life
359 among individual members and homes of the Church.
- 360 (b) The music director and the minister(s) shall attend any committee meetings.

361 Subsection B: Ad hoc Committees

362 Ad hoc committees shall be appointed by the administrative council chair when needed to
363 administer the work of the Church, with the approval of the administrative council. These
364 committees shall perform duties assigned and shall continue for such time as they are designated.

365 These committees include but are not limited to:

- 366 (1) Search and Call Committee shall be responsible for recommending prospective ministers to
367 the administrative council.
- 368 (a) Appointed by the chair of the administrative council and presented to the
369 administrative council for approval, the committee shall serve until a new
370 minister is hired.
- 371 (b) A representative and diverse committee of not fewer than seven nor more than
372 nine active members shall make up the committee.
- 373 (c) Once approval from the administrative council is secured, the prospective
374 minister will be presented to the Congregation for approval.

- 375 (d) Congressional approval requires a two-thirds majority vote of members present
376 and voting in a regular or called congregational assembly. Congregational
377 approval must be secured before a call may be extended.
- 378 (e) The committee shall utilize the services of The Christian Church (Disciples of
379 Christ) in the Southwest for information and counsel concerning prospective
380 candidates.
- 381 (2) Guiding Committee will provide high-level direction and long-term priorities to the
382 administrative council, staff, and committees. The committee shall report to the
383 administrative council and the congregation.

384 SECTION SEVEN: Nominations

385 On behalf of the congregation, the nominations committee will work to secure a nominee for all
386 servant leaders and administrative council member positions from the Church's membership.
387 Nominees will be presented to the congregational assembly for official nomination and election.

388 Subsection A: Nomination Process

389 The administrative council is responsible for selecting a nominating committee and calling elections,
390 to be generally held at the same time of the annual congregational assembly.

- 391 (1) The congregation shall be notified of the election's nomination period, ten days prior to the
392 nomination period starting. Within this notification, a high-level description of each available
393 position, responsibilities, prerequisites/possible skill requirements, length of term, estimated
394 time-commitment, and the contact of a previous office holder to provide more detailed
395 information. Notification of the nomination period can occur through common church
396 communication.
- 397 (2) The nomination period will last for a set amount of time, as determined by the committee.
398 Consideration of all nominations received will occur for a period of time deemed
399 appropriate by the administrative council chair and will provide enough time for the
400 committee to complete its activities. All open positions must have a nominee selected by the
401 committee before the called election.
- 402 (3) At the end of the consideration period, the nomination committee must present the ballot of
403 nominees to the congregation for their consideration. This notification may occur through
404 common church communication. This notification will act as the official ballot of the vote
405 (absentee or present).

406 Subsection B: Election

407 All elections of nominees must be held at a called congregational assembly. Nominations can be
408 accepted from the floor with verbal consent of a present-active member or through writing for an
409 absent-active member.

410 A person shall be considered elected to the position for which they have been nominated if they
411 receive a simple majority vote of the present voting members. Any nominations that do not receive
412 a simple majority will be deemed to have failed.

413 SECTION TEN: Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws

414 The Constitution and Bylaws may be amended through the processes listed below. Any action at a
415 called congregational assembly must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the members
416 present.

417 (1) Announcement of proposed amendment(s) to the constitution will be made at a meeting of
418 the administrative council and copies of the proposed amendment(s) will be made available
419 at the time the amendment(s) are announced at a regular Sunday service at least two weeks
420 before the vote is taken. The proposed amendments shall also be mailed or emailed to all
421 church members at least two weeks before the vote is taken.

422 (2) All proposed bylaws or changes to the bylaws must be presented to the congregation
423 through common church communication formats at a Sunday service at least two weeks
424 before the bylaws or changes to the bylaws may be brought before the administrative
425 council. Ample time and means must be given to the congregation to provide feedback. The
426 bylaw or changes to the bylaws must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the
427 administrative council voting membership (8 of 12 voting members).

428