

## BYLAWS OF COVENANT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

**PREAMBLE:** The earliest church was a grassroots movement of Christ's followers. They shared a love of Christ, were committed to each other, and took their message to the world. Today we, too, must journey up, journey in, and journey out. This happens through our covenant with God, each other, and the world to share our talents, time, and gifts. *All participants of Covenant Christian Church are invited and encouraged to covenant to a team and volunteer to a task as a way to grow in discipleship and further the mission of the church.*

**Comment [PW1]:** We inserted the language about "Covenant to a team and Volunteer to a task." Also, making connection to discipleship seems important to our function as church.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** We are spiritual seekers working to grow in our love of God, deepening our connection to each other, and sharing with the world our passion for justice and peace.

**COVENANT CHRISTIAN CHURCH:** We will adhere to the principles of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and are open to all.

**Comment [PW2]:** This originally included "all believers in Christ." However, it has recently come to our attention that several regular participants might identify themselves as "non-believers." They are welcomed too.

### ARTICLE 1 Church Board

**1.1. Composition of Board.** The church board shall be responsible for church finances, budget, salaried personnel, and ensuring that each journey team follows its team mission statement. The board shall consist of the minister, chair, prior year's chair, chair-elect, board secretary, financial officer, treasurer, and one or more members at large. There shall be one member at large if the church has 200 or fewer families; three members at large if the church has 201 to 400 families; and five members at large if the church has 401 or more families.

**Comment [PW3]:** Suggested addition at congregational gathering last Fall.

**1.2. Election.** Proposed board members shall be selected by the current board, and approved by the voting members at the annual congregational meeting.

**1.3. Terms.** The chair shall be elected annually. The secretary and financial officer shall be elected in even-numbered years. The treasurer and member at large shall be elected in odd-numbered years. The member at large shall be elected biennially, and if more than one member at large is serving, then their terms shall be staggered so that not all members at

large are elected the same year. A board member may not serve consecutive terms in the same board position.

**1.4. Meetings.** The board shall meet quarterly, or more often at the discretion of the chair. A simple majority of board members plus one shall constitute a quorum. *As much as possible, the board shall seek consensus in its decisions, allowing room for prayerful discernment. When voting is necessary,* votes shall be determined by simple majority of board members present at the meeting.

**Comment [PW4]:** Suggested addition of "Consensus" as a decision-making process. Also has an "escape valve" when consensus cannot be reached.

**1.5. Recordkeeping.** The secretary shall be responsible for meeting minutes and recordkeeping, and shall provide all minutes and records to the church secretary, who shall retain them permanently.

**1.6. Financial Matters.** The financial officer shall be responsible for receipts, deposits, and church stewardship. The treasurer shall be responsible for *preparing the initial draft of the budget, paying bills, bill management*, balancing the checkbook, and maintaining any savings accounts or investment accounts.

**Comment [PW5]:** Several suggested additions from congregational gathering.

**1.7. Agreements.** An agreement shall not be binding upon the church unless the same is in writing, and signed by the chair and one other board member. The church secretary shall retain a permanent copy of each agreement.

## ARTICLE 2 Congregational Meetings

**2.1. Regular and Special Meetings.** A regular meeting of the congregation shall be held in the fall of each year. A special meeting of the congregation may be held at the discretion of the chair. Notice of a regular or special congregational meeting shall be posted with agenda no less than two weeks prior to the meeting.

**2.2. Voting.** *Ten per cent of votes entitled to be cast shall constitute a quorum. As much as possible, the congregation will seek consensus in all decisions allowing room for prayerful discernment. If consensus is not reached after three attempts, a vote may be necessary. When a vote is necessary,* votes shall be determined by simple majority of *participating* members present at the meeting, except that revoking or amending the

**Comment [PW6]:** Per conversation with Breanna. This is straight from the Iowa code as the default quorum for an organization.

**Comment [PW7]:** Again, the suggested language about consensus with the "escape valve."

bylaws shall require a two-thirds majority vote. A *participating* member must be present at a meeting to vote. A *participating* member may vote if he or she is *at least 16 years of age and* either participates in at least six church-sponsored activities per year or is a *regular* financial contributor to the church.

## ARTICLE 3 Journey Teams

**3.1. Journey Teams.** The direction of the church shall be determined by four journey teams: Journey Out, Journey In, Journey Up, and Physical Plant. Each team shall prepare and adopt a team mission statement, and shall have a board-member liaison assigned to it.

**3.2. Leadership.** Each team shall select a team leader annually. The term of a team leader shall be one year. A person may serve *no more than 3* consecutive terms as team leader.

**3.3. Formation.** *All participants of Covenant Christian Church are invited and encouraged to covenant to a team and volunteer to a task as a way to grow in discipleship and further the mission of the church.* A team shall consist of individuals who *covenant* to serve on the team. *Within six months of the annual meeting, each team shall review the core responsibilities necessary for the successful functioning of its mission to the church and compile a list of volunteer service opportunities to further the mission of the team.* *All church participants are invited to volunteer to these tasks regardless of whether they participate in any particular team.*

**3.4. Regular and Special Meetings** *Each team shall meet quarterly at a minimum. Teams may meet more often at the discretion of the team leader.*

**3.5. Budget.** Each team shall receive an annual budget approved by the board. A team may allocate its budget in any way that will further its mission statement; provided, however, that the board may veto any activity or expenditure it deems outside the team's mission statement or not in the best interest of the church as a whole. A team shall not make any expenditure beyond its budget without *first obtaining prior board approval and then raising sufficient funds to cover such expenditure.*

**Comment [PW8]:** We took out the twelve year old version. Some feedback indicated this was a recipe for disaster (and potentially harmful to the young person). Not sure if there's consensus on this. After speaking with Breanna, we I changed adult to 16 year old. (a sixteen year old can serve as witness to a Will and can drive).

**Comment [PW9]:** We removed items A-D which seemed to contradict the idea that each team forms it's on mission statement. Items A through D were mission statements for each Journey Team. Instead we will save these for now in what might be the beginning of a new document entitled, "Policy and Procedure Manual." Mission Statements and responsibilities can change from year to year and therefore aren't in the By-Laws.

**Comment [PW10]:** We added this after review with Board about the benefit of having consistency, balanced with the difficulty to fill new positions every year.

**Comment [PW11]:** We thought it was helpful to reinforce the idea (mantra): "Covenant to a team. Volunteer to a task."

**Comment [PW12]:** Covenant to a Team. (mantra)

**Comment [PW13]:** This arose out of helpful discussion at a recent Journey Up team meeting. Some things need to be outlined as "core and non-negotiable" to our existence and healthy functioning of church. These things are the core responsibilities and will always be part of what we do. (Worship; Communion, etc.) Other things are Tasks and may change from year to year...depending for example on How we decide to do worship, or How we wish to celebrate communion.

**Comment [PW14]:** Volunteer to a task. (mantra).

**Comment [PW15]:** This addresses some of the anxiety we've experienced this year because teams are likely not meeting enough.

**Comment [PW16]:** We simply reversed the order of the original sentence so that board approval comes first, then fundraising. This prevents the case where a group raises funds (without board approval) and then asks to spend those funds.

## ARTICLE 4 Minister

**4.1. Duties of Minister.** The minister shall be a non-voting member of the board, and shall serve as a resource for the journey teams. *The minister shall work with all teams in implementing the mission and vision of the church.* The exact nature of the minister's duties shall be set forth in the employment contract.

**Comment [PW17]:** The original document had something in there about mediating conflict. It was agreed to remove that and add something like this.

**4.2. Vacancy in Office.** If a minister cannot perform the duties of the position, is terminated, or resigns, the board shall select an interim minister with the aid of the regional office. The board shall then select *a pastoral search committee* of five members, with no more than one member serving on the current board, to find a new minister. *The search committee will review candidates submitted through denominational channels, and interview candidates in good standing with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or partner denominations.* The board shall be responsible for negotiating and approving the minister's salary, benefits, and job description.

**Comment [PW18]:** The original document did not use the denominational language of "Pastoral Search Committee." (Congregational meeting).

**Comment [PW19]:** Suggested addition of denominational ties to the process. (Congregational meeting)

**4.3. Pastoral Relations.** A pastoral-relations committee shall exist as set forth in the minister's contract.

## ARTICLE 5 Auxiliary Organizations

**5.1. Formation.** An auxiliary organization may be formed upon prior board approval, and shall cooperate and be coordinated with the church mission statement.

**5.2. Property.** If an auxiliary organization dissolves or is inactive for two years, then all its funds, personal property, and real property shall revert to the church.

These Bylaws are adopted this \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.

COVENANT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Its Board Secretary