

Unanimously approved by the Executive Committee, May 13, 2013
Unanimously approved by the General Board, June 3, 2013
Unanimously approved by Congregational Meeting, June 23, 2013

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Organizing for Our Mission - Structures and Functions¹ (“Bylaws”)

Our Vision

We seek to be a congregation where spiritual growth is the norm, where growing in faith is expected, and that expects and respects a diversity of opinion. We will be a community of faith, radical in hospitality, outrageous in generosity and joyful in service to God and neighbor (from the “Philosophy of Ministry & Vision” statement approved by the congregation, June 2008)

Our Assumptions

- *We will seek to be a “permission-giving” community and not a “permission-suspicious” community.*
- *We will always start out by assuming the best about one another.*
- *Our Ministry Board will not seek to re-do the things that it has asked others to do.*
- *We will have structures and assumptions which presume a trust in our staff and leadership.*
- *Our Ministry Board will be responsible for giving oversight to the “big picture” and strategy, and the various groups/teams/committees/ministries will be empowered to do the particular works of ministry, identifying the tactics needful to do so.*
- *In all our structures and organizations, we will seek to be “lean and nimble,” always remembering that the structure was made for the mission and never vice versa!*

¹This document is intended to serve as the “Bylaws” of First Christian Church, and to give guidance to the way our corporate and missional life is organized and structured. However, the change in title is meant to strongly and intentionally convey that our mission is at the center of our life together, and not the nomenclature of non-profit corporate structures.

Our Structures & Functions Based On Our Mission and Vision

I. “A Community of Faith”

A. **“Membership.”** As a “community of faith” and “the Body of Christ,” the notion of “membership” is not the most appropriate way to understand our mission. For the purposes of this “Structures and Functions” document (hereafter “SAF”) all those who are active participants in the life and ministries of First Christian Church may serve (unless specifically indicated otherwise) in any setting or role.²

B. The Community Gathers.

1. The primary way the Community of Faith gathers is at Sunday and other times of worship. The Senior Pastor and other pastoral staff shall have primary responsibility, in consultation as needed with advisory groups, for planning and leading regular worship.
2. At least once a year, normally in June, the entire community will gather in an All Church Celebration (a.k.a. “Regular Congregational Meeting”). The purpose of that gathering will be to elect the leadership specified in this SAF and to celebrate the accomplishments in mission and ministry in the preceding year. The Administrative Committee will identify and publicize the date at least one month in advance. Any adult (18 or older) participant in the life and worship of FCC may vote at this celebration, provided he or she has shown interest and participation for at least six months. In the event that there is a question about a participant’s voting status, the Senior Pastor and Administrative Committee shall have the final say.
3. Special Congregational Meetings. A special congregational meeting may be called (for the purpose of calling a Senior Pastor, or for any other item with the proviso that the meeting may only discuss and act on matter[s] announced in advance) by the Moderator, Senior Pastor, or twenty-five adult participants in the life and worship of

²See the Appendix for more on this notion of “membership” in relation to the church’s Articles of Incorporation.

FCC (such participants shall have shown interest, participation, or activity for at least six months as determined by the Administrative Committee). Such meetings will be announced a minimum of 30 days in advance via appropriate venues such as announcements from the pulpit, printed newsletter notices, email, church website, and social media.

C. The Community Organizes for Mission – The Ministry Board

1. There will be a Ministry Board composed of a) the four members of the Administrative Committee, b) the Chair of the Elders, c) the Chair of the Trustees, and d) six at-large members. (The Moderator may also appoint a Youth Representative to serve on the Ministry Board). All members of the Ministry Board will be active participants in the worship and mission life of FCC and will give of their time, talent, and treasure.
2. The Chairs of the Elders and Trustees will be elected by those groups. They will serve as members of the Ministry Board from July 1 to the following June 30.
3. Three members-at-large will be elected at each Annual Celebration for two-year terms. Each member-at-large may serve no more than two consecutive terms.
4. The Senior Pastor will be a non-voting member of the Ministry Board; he/she or the Moderator may invite other members of the pastoral/program staff to participate in the meetings of the Board (or report to it) at their discretion.
5. The Ministry Board will normally meet at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called by the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, or Senior Pastor.
6. While the Ministry Board will seek to make decisions by consensus, a simple majority (unless otherwise required by law or otherwise noted in this SAF) will suffice for any action.
7. The Ministry Board shall have the responsibility for: setting, with the guidance and leadership of the Senior Pastor, the values, goals, and mission and ministry strategies for FCC; upon the recommendation

of the Senior Pastor, employing all ministerial and program staff (except the Senior Pastor); approving the annual or biennial operating budget; confirming the Chairs/Conveners of the Ongoing Ministries Teams; receiving reports from Ongoing Ministries Teams and other ministries/groups and offering counsel to those Teams/Groups.

8. It shall be the responsibility of the Ministry Board to set the broad policies and practices that shall enhance the mission and ministry of First Christian Church, along with other responsibilities this SAF may explicitly designate, or responsibilities which are required by law. The Senior Pastor shall be a resource to the Ministry Board, bringing to its attention any matters that affect the overall policies and practices of the church. The Senior Pastor shall have the responsibility for day-to-day management of staff, routine approved budget expenditures, and implementation decisions regarding carrying out the mission and ministry. The Senior Pastor shall be “head of staff” and will work closely with the Personnel Committee and, as needed, the Ministry Board and Administrative Committee, for counsel regarding staffing decisions that he or she may make.

D. The Community Organizes for Mission – The Administrative Committee

The voting members of the Administrative Committee are the officers of the church (detailed below) and the Senior Pastor. The Administrative Committee or Senior Pastor may invite other pastoral/program staff to attend meetings or report at their discretion. Each officer will be elected at the Annual Celebration, will serve a two-year term beginning July 1, and may not serve more than two consecutive full terms.

The Administrative Committee shall act on behalf of the Ministry Board to implement its policies in consultation as needed with the Senior Pastor, and shall have broad powers to act on routine matters between regular meetings of the Ministry Board.

E. Officers of the Church. There shall be four officers of the church:

1. The Moderator. Shall preside at regular or special meetings of the Congregation, Ministry Board and Administrative Committee.

Shall execute any contracts on behalf of the church and as approved by the appropriate body. Shall work closely with the Senior Pastor on matters related to the church's vision and direction and the Ministry Board's and staff's implementation. Shall be an ex officio member of all church committees and ministry teams (or may designate another officer to attend such on his/her behalf). Legally, the moderator shall have the usual and customary duties and responsibilities related to chairing a non-profit board of directors. In consultation with the Senior Pastor and Administrative Committee, shall devise a method for the regular review of the Senior Pastor.

2. The Vice-Moderator. Shall be the Chair of the Nominating Committee. Shall act in the role of the Moderator upon the Moderator's temporary absence. If the office of Moderator becomes vacant, the Vice-Moderator may, but is not required to, assume the role of Moderator for the remaining term. If the Vice-Moderator declines to become the Moderator, the Ministry Board shall elect another member of the Ministry Board to serve out the remaining term as Moderator.
3. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be responsible for working closely with the Senior Pastor and support staff to ensure that the church's finances are dealt with in a professional fashion with a high sense of being responsible stewards of the resources God has entrusted to the church for its mission. While the Senior Pastor has day-to-day responsibility for implementing appropriate financial processes and controls and supervising support staff to those ends, the Treasurer shall be a resource to the Senior Pastor as mutually agreed. The Treasurer shall, in collaboration with the Senior Pastor and appropriate support staff, regularly apprise the Congregation, Ministry Board, and Administrative Committee of the financial situation of the church. The Treasurer and one other officer (normally the Moderator) will sign all checks over an amount that the Ministry Board shall specify.
4. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings and decisions of the Congregation, Ministry Board, and Administrative committee, whether such meetings and decisions shall occur in-person, via phone, or via email. Working closely with the Senior Pastor, the Secretary shall ensure that the church

retains appropriate records of all meetings and decisions.

The Ministry Board, unless otherwise specified, shall fill any officer or Ministry Board vacancy for the remainder of their terms.

F. **Ongoing Ministry Teams:** The following shall be the ongoing Ministry Teams: Finance and Stewardship, Nominating, Personnel, Missions and Outreach, Trustees, Congregational Life and Hospitality Team, Memorials. With any specific exceptions noted below, the Chairs and members of these Teams shall serve concurrently with the two-year terms of the church officers, and are eligible for re-appointment. Any active participant in the life of First Christian Church is eligible to serve on these Teams.

1. **Nominating Committee.** The Vice-Moderator shall be the Chair of the Nominating Committee. In consultation with the Senior Pastor, and upon the recommendation of the Vice-Moderator, the Moderator shall appoint five other persons, broadly representative of the life of the church, to serve as a Nominating Committee in anticipation of bringing a slate of nominees to the Annual Celebration. The Senior Pastor shall be a non-voting member of the Committee and is expected to give confidential counsel to the Committee about possible nominees.
2. **Finance and Stewardship Team.** The Church Treasurer shall be the Chair of the Finance and Stewardship Team. Upon the Treasurer's election (or re-election), he/she shall appoint three to five members of the Team who shall serve during the time the Treasurer is in office. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Team and shall be charged with bringing each year an initial draft of an operating budget for the Team's review. The Team shall give broad oversight to the financial policies and practices of the church, reporting those as necessary to the Ministry Board for their information and/or confirmation. The Team, in consultation with the Senior Pastor and appropriate Ministry Teams/Committees, shall have (or designate others to have) spending authority for Operational and Special Funds. The Finance and Stewardship Team shall be a resource to the Senior Pastor for an annual stewardship campaign and for ongoing stewardship education.
3. **Personnel Committee.** The Moderator, in consultation with the

Senior Pastor and with the approval of the Ministry Board, shall appoint a chair and four other members. The Personnel Committee shall serve primarily as a resource to the Senior Pastor in his/her role as head of staff, offering counsel as needed. The Committee shall also have responsibility for formulating (with confirmation by the Ministry Board as needed) any appropriate Personnel Policies.

- 4. Missions and Outreach Team.** The Moderator shall appoint a Chair and five to seven other persons to serve concurrently with the term of the Moderator. The Missions and Outreach Committee shall be responsible for congregational mission education, and for allocations to mission projects and causes from monies delegated to it by this SAF.
- 5. Memorials Committee.** The Moderator shall appoint a Chair and two other members, plus the Senior Pastor, to serve as the Committee. The chair and members serve at the Moderator's pleasure and do not have specific terms. The Memorials Committee shall be responsible for publicizing opportunities to give for "special projects" in memory of loved ones, shall seek to keep records of memorial donations, and shall expend monies from the Memorials Fund for such projects.
- 6. Trustees.**
 - A. The Trustees 1) Act as the legal agent for the congregation in all matters relating to the real property of the Church; 2) Have supervision over all endowments and trusts, subject to the policies and decisions of the Ministry Board or congregational actions; 3) Maintain and set operating procedures for the Columbarium, the Irene and Floyd Armstrong Memorial Garden, and the Labyrinth; 4) Collaborate with the staff and appropriate committees to maintain and improve the church property; 5) When the Ministry Board authorizes any instrument conveying or creating a lien or encumbrance on the property of the Church or the borrowing of money, the Chair of the Trustees and the Moderator of the Ministry Board shall jointly sign, execute and deliver all documents reasonably required to carry out and effect the action of the Ministry Board.
 - B. The Trustees consist of five members, elected by the

congregation at the Annual Celebration for a three-year term or to fill an un-expired term. A minimum of one shall be elected each year at the Annual Celebration for a full three-year term. Trustees shall not succeed themselves upon the completion of a full three-year term in office but may be elected to another term after an absence from the position of at least one year. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member without vote of the Trustees and will be expected to give leadership and counsel to the Trustees about items needing their attention. The Trustees shall organize with a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

- 7. Congregational Life and Hospitality Team.** The Moderator, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, shall appoint a Chair and at least three members of the Team to serve concurrently with the term of the officers. The Chair of the Team shall work very closely with the Senior Pastor (or her/his staff designee) to organize for and ensure that the following functions are appropriately carried out:
- A. Communion serving at worship (the deacon role).
 - B. Communion preparation.
 - C. Visitor welcoming (greeters, ushers, etc.) and follow-up communication.
 - D. Ongoing communication with regular and new participants.
 - E. Congregational hospitality events (e.g., Sunday hospitality, all-church meals, bereavement support, etc.)
- G. Short-Term Task Groups:** The Ministry Board, Administrative Committee, Senior Pastor, or other pastoral and program staff in consultation with the Senior Pastor, may appoint short-term, task-focused groups to carry out mission and ministry opportunities. Such appointments will be reported to the Administrative Committee and Ministry Board and these groups will report to them as needed. The Chairs of each ongoing and short-term Team/Task Group/Committee will submit reports to the Administrative Committee and Ministry Board as requested; each will be invited to attend meetings of the Ministry Board but are not required to be present.

II. “Where Spiritual Growth is the Norm...and Growing in Faith is Expected”

- A. **Senior Pastor.** First Christian Church shall call a Senior Pastor (or Senior Co-Pastors). The Senior Pastor shall be the chief spiritual leader of the congregation in consultation with the Elders, shall be the head of staff, shall have day-to-day authority for routine expenditures of the operating budget, shall have the authority to employ, supervise, and dismiss support staff within the limits of the Ministry Board-approved budget, and shall be charged with offering and articulating a vision for how the church will respond to and carry out its mission and ministry opportunities. In consultation with the Elders, and reporting and accountable to the Ministry Board, the Senior Pastor shall also have primary responsibility for ensuring adequate structures and practices are in place for education, worship, evangelism, children and youth ministry, and other areas as needed in order to enhance the continuing spiritual growth of the congregation.
- B. **When the office of Senior Pastor is to be vacant,** the Moderator appoints, and then Ministry Board confirms, a seven-member search committee (with the Moderator an ex officio member without vote in addition to the seven) who shall work closely with the Regional Minister of the Central Rocky Mountain Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in seeking a Senior Pastor. Any person called as Senior Pastor will have standing in the Order of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In order to receive a call as Senior Pastor, a candidate will have an 80% affirmative vote by the congregation of those present and voting at a congregational meeting called for and publicized at least two weeks in advance of the vote. Absentee or email votes may be accepted only with the approval of the Moderator. In the event that dismissal is contemplated, the Moderator shall seek the counsel of the Elders and the Regional Minister. The Senior Pastor may be dismissed by a 2/3 vote of those present and voting at a congregational meeting called for the purpose of considering dismissal, and publicized at least thirty days in advance of the vote.
- C. **Program staff.** Upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor, the Ministry Board, by majority vote, may employ other program staff. Such staff will be under the supervision of the Senior Pastor and may be dismissed by him/her subject to a simple majority vote of the Ministry Board.

D. Other ministerial staff. For other-than-full-time ministerial staff, the provisions of the preceding paragraph will apply. When a full-time ministerial staff member is sought, the Moderator shall appoint a five-person search committee; in addition the Senior Pastor will be an ex officio member of that committee. The Committee shall seek the counsel of the Regional Minister in its work as it develops a job description in consultation with the Senior Pastor, considers candidates, and conducts interviews. The successful candidate must be approved by the Senior Pastor and an 80% affirmative vote of the Search Committee, Administrative Committee, and Ministry Board. A full time ministerial staff person may be dismissed upon a 2/3 vote of the Ministry Board. Any person holding such a position will either have or be eligible to seek (and will so seek) ministerial standing with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

E. Elders.

1. First Christian Church affirms the historic importance of the role of Elders in carrying out its mission and ministry. The Elders, in mutual cooperation with the Senior Pastor and other pastoral staff, shall serve as the spiritual leaders of the congregation, seeking to organize themselves to carry out practices and behavior that enhance and up-build the spiritual life of the congregation. The Elders shall serve at the Lord's Table. As models of mature Christian faith, it is expected that Elders shall be active participants in the life of the church, be a part of at least one ministry group, shall be regular attenders in worship, and regular financial givers.
2. Each year at the Annual Celebration, four elders shall be elected for three-year terms. Any elder may be re-elected to more than one term, but only after a year's break. Partial or unexpired terms do not count as part of the three-year term limitation. The Nominating Committee shall have the responsibility for nominating Elders. In the event an Elder cannot serve a full-term, the Ministry Board may replace that Elder until the following Annual Celebration.
3. The pastoral staff of First Christian Church shall be understood to be "honorary Elders" without vote. The Elders may bring to the Ministry Board recommendations for Emeritus status for Elders (or other positions in the church, such as Pastor Emeritus).

III. “Joyful in Service to God and Neighbor”

Mission and Outreach. First Christian Church expresses its historic commitment to mission and outreach in the following ways:

- A. 10% of all un-designated contributions to the annual operating budget shall be allocated to mission and outreach.³ One-half of that amount shall be given to the Disciples Mission Fund. The other half shall be expended by the Missions and Outreach Team for local, national, and international mission initiatives at their discretion.
- B. In the event that First Christian Church ceases to be affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), its property and all assets shall be given in equal shares to the Central Rocky Mountain Region of the Christian Church and to the Christian Church Foundation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to establish the First Christian Church of Colorado Springs Permanent Fund, or their legal successors. In this event, only the income/earnings from those assets will be used to support other ministries of the Central Rocky Mountain Region and the Christian Church Foundation.

IV. “Radical in Hospitality”

Acknowledging the key role that the virtue of hospitality plays in the story of God’s people throughout the Bible, First Christian Church shall seek to embody that hospitality through the provisions of the Congregational Hospitality Team as noted in the section of this SAF, “**Community of Faith/Congregational Hospitality Team.**”

V. “We Expect and Respect a Diversity of Opinion”

- A. Each person’s relationship with God is personal; therefore no “test of fellowship” or requirement for adherence to any “creed” shall ever be required for participation in worship or ministry activities of First Christian Church.
- B. Consideration and discussion of important matters shall be conducted through direct communication with honesty, transparency, respect and

³This commitment is consonant with the ancient Biblical practice of “the tithe,” where at least ten percent of one’s income is given to “good works” beyond oneself.

civility.

- C. The leadership of the church will not consider or act on anonymous comments concerning staff or participants.
- D. All meetings of church bodies (with the exception of the Personnel Committee and Pastoral Relations Committees) shall be open to any active participant in the life of the congregation, with the exception of those meetings where sensitive or confidential legal or personnel matters will be discussed or acted upon. The Moderator in consultation with the Senior Pastor may deem a meeting or portion of a meeting closed if it would not, in their judgment, be up-building to the life of the church for such to be open.

VI. “We Will Be Outrageous in Generosity”

Following the example and injunctions of Christ, each participant in the life and ministry of First Christian Church will be invited and challenged to give of their time, talent, and financial resources through an annual stewardship emphasis and ongoing stewardship education opportunities. Each participant will also be invited and challenged to make a provision for the church’s ongoing ministries in his or her will. Staff and the Finance and Stewardship Team will be responsible for making sure that participants are accorded these important opportunities.

The Senior Pastor, in conjunction with appropriate support staff, will implement policies and practices to ensure that the amounts given by individuals are held in appropriate confidence.

VII. Implementation and Amendments

- A. This “Structure and Functions” document shall be effective (and shall immediately replace the “Restated and Amended Bylaws of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Colorado Springs” as amended May 18, 2008) upon its approval by a 2/3 vote of those present and voting at a regular or special congregational meeting, with the following exceptions:

The new composition, election, terms, and rotation of the at-large members of the Ministry Board (previously known as the General Board) as described in this document shall begin on July 1, 2014. However, the composition, election, and terms of the officers of the church shall be as this document describes them.

- B. Amendments. Amendments to this Structures and Functions document may be made by 2/3 vote of the congregation at the Annual Celebration or at a special congregational meeting provided the proposed amendment has been circulated in writing by the Moderator and Senior Pastor at least 30 days in advance in appropriate venues (e.g., church newsletter, website, electronic or postal mail, etc.)
- C. Severability. In the event that any law, decision of any court with appropriate jurisdiction, or ordinance shall invalidate any portion of this SAF, such law, decision, or ordinance shall not affect the other provisions of this document.

APPENDIX

Section 6.1 of the Articles of Incorporation (enacted March 18, 1896, and amended December 14, 1986) state that *“The membership shall consist of those who are now members of the corporation, those who shall unite with it by confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who have or will give expression of their faith through baptism and commitment to Him, and those who unite by transfer of membership from another Christian Church or denomination and reaffirm their faith and commitment to Jesus Christ.”* This “Structures and Functions” document explicitly asserts that for the purposes of “membership” in this regard, the clause “commitment to Him” shall be controlling and that therefore “membership” shall be understood to mean ***“Any adult participant in the life and worship of First Christian Church provided he or she has shown interest, participation, or activity for at least six months.”*** In the event that there is a question about a participant’s status, the Senior Pastor and Administrative Committee shall have the final say.”