

# THE BYLAWS OF FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF LAWRENCE, KANSAS<sup>1</sup>

## I. CHURCH GOVERNANCE

The government of First Christian Church of Lawrence, Kansas (“First Christian Church”, “FCC” or the “Church”) is vested in the body of believers who compose it and are members of the Church. Persons duly received by the members will constitute membership, as defined below.

## II. CHURCH YEAR

The Church year begins on January 1 of each year to coincide with the fiscal year.

## III. MEMBERSHIP

### A. Establishment of Membership

An individual who desires to become a member of First Christian Church may request membership at any regular church service or by inquiring with a pastor, elder, or trustee of the Church. Membership requires that the individual make a personal profession of faith. Such profession of faith may be signified by a public statement at a regular church service, a private profession made to a pastor or one or more of the elders, or by signing the First Christian Church Statement of Faith, as memorialized in a separate document. Additionally, membership in the Church requires that the individual be baptized in water or certify that he or she was previously baptized in water. Restoration of membership may be granted through the same process in cases where an individual’s membership has lapsed, has been terminated, or records of membership were lost.

### B. Membership Status

Active members, as defined below, shall have full rights and responsibilities of membership, as noted below. Inactive members, as defined below, may regain full rights as active members by resuming participation and/or support of the Church prior to any action or Church affair he or she wishes to vote on or have input in. Inactive members may have their membership terminated after three (3) years of continued non-participation. Former members, as defined below, must petition for restoration of their membership in accordance with these Bylaws.

- i. Active members are those who have attended Church services or participated in Church ministry, if physically able, and/or have supported the Church financially within the previous year; and those who are unable to attend due to health issues, but who have indicated their desire to remain as active members and/or continued to support the Church financially during the past year.

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<sup>1</sup> These Bylaws are to be referenced and understood in conjunction with the First Christian Church Constitution.

- ii. Inactive members are those who were formerly active, but who have neither attended Church services or participated in a Church ministry, nor supported the Church financially within the previous year.
- iii. Former members are those whose membership has been terminated.

**C. Rights of Members**

Active members of the Church are entitled to vote in elections and on questions submitted to the Church at regular or special business meetings, provided the member is present in person or in accordance with the remote/virtual/electronic procedures or participates via approved electronic means for holding virtual meetings. The requirements of being present in person or remotely are contained herein and in the Church's Constitution.

Active members of the Church may preside over communion and administer baptism.

**D. Termination of Membership**

Membership may be terminated for the following reasons:

- i. Death;
- ii. Transfer of membership to another church. The member may request a formal letter of transfer or may indicate to Church leadership his or her intention to leave First Christian Church to transfer to a different church;
- iii. Exclusion by action of First Christian Church. There may be occasion where behavior of a member is such that exclusion from the Church may be appropriate. Such a determination shall be made by Church leadership, as defined below. Such action will only be taken after attempts to reconcile the offending member and restore him or her to repentance have failed;
- iv. Erasure. After three (3) years of non-participation, inactive members may be purged from the membership rolls of the Church. Prior to erasure, Church leaders or staff members will make reasonable attempts to contact and communicate with inactive members in the hope of persuading them to resume participation and attendance.

**IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, CHURCH OFFICERS, AND STAFF**

Three (3) boards govern First Christian Church: (1) Elder Board (spiritual); (2) Trustee Board (finance/facilities); and (3) the Personnel Board (human resources/legal). The staff of the Church are to implement the strategy and business of the Church under the leadership of the Elder Board.

**A. Selection of Board Members**

Elected and appointed leaders are required to be active members of the Church as defined by the current Bylaws and Constitution. Specific requirements for the leaders can be found in each section below.

Candidates are suggested by anyone in the congregation to the applicable board. Each board reviews the suggestions and gives its final list of candidates to the Personnel Board, which presents the lists to the Church body at least two (2) weeks prior to the annual Church meeting (as defined by the Constitution) for congregational vote. Immediate family members may not serve on the same board at the same time. Individuals may not serve on the Elder Board and Trustee Board at the same time.

Except as provided below concerning the election and term of the Personnel Board, each Elder and Trustee Board member is asked to serve a three (3) year term and may continue for an additional one (1) to three (3) years with approval of the congregation. Any board member can be reelected after one (1) year of not serving on the same board. A member can be removed from a board at any time by majority vote of the board. Each board is responsible for electing its own Chair and Vice-Chair. In the case that a member of a board leaves, the respective board can choose a replacement until the annual Church meeting where all nominees will be voted upon by the congregation.

## **B. Primary Function and Management Roles of Each Board**

### **a. Personnel Board (Human Resources/Legal Leadership)**

The Personnel Board provides the human resources and legal representation for the Church. This board consists of a minimum of three (3) people: one (1) or more members of the Elder Board, one (1) or more members of the Trustee Board, and one (1) to three (3) members at large from the congregation who are elected by the congregation for a two (2) year term, eligible for re-election. If additional congregational representatives are needed, the Personnel Board may seek volunteers for a temporary appointment to the board.

Paid staff may not serve on the Personnel Board. The Personnel Board will meet on an ad hoc basis.

The Personnel Board hires or dismisses staff by a majority vote of members present. The Personnel Board will recommend the hiring or dismissal of the Senior/Lead Pastor to the congregation for a majority vote of the members present. When the Senior/Lead Pastor position is available, they will select a Senior/Lead Pastor Search Team of five (5) people, which presents its final candidate for consideration to the church for a vote. The Chair of the Personnel Board will act as Moderator at Church meetings.

In addition to the above, responsibilities of the Personnel Board include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Reviews and approves job descriptions;
- Recommends compensation and wage adjustments;
- Handles lawsuits or other legal actions;
- Develops and maintains personnel and administrative policies and procedures;
- Mediates disputes that may occur within the staff;

- Addresses any personnel issues that are not addressed by the person's immediate supervisor;
- Performs the annual Senior/Lead Pastor review;
- Approves changes to the Bylaws;
- Proposes changes to the Constitution.

**b. Trustee Board (Financial/Facilities Leadership)**

The Trustees are the stewards of the finances and facilities of the Church. The Trustee Board is responsible for ensuring the Church ministries and entities remain fiscally responsible to the annual budget, and for the maintenance, betterment, and security of the facilities of the Church. Concerning the facilities, the Trustee Board has full discretion to spend funds necessary and available for the maintenance and betterment of the facilities. The Trustee Board consists of four (4) to six (6) people and a Church Administrator as a non-voting member. At the beginning of each year, the board may decide to choose a Trustee Emeritus or a leader-in-training to serve for one (1) year without voting rights.

Trustees will recommend incurrence of long-term debt, or the sale or purchase of property, to the congregation for a majority vote of active members present at a meeting only after written notice of the proposed action has been distributed at a regular worship service at least two (2) weeks before the vote is taken.

Certain Trustees will have a specific role as determined by the Trustee Board including, but not limited to:

- The Chair of the Trustee Board, as corporate chair, signs legal documents and represents the Trustee Board in financial and legal matters;
- The Church Administrator signs checks, maintains corporate records, provides financial reports as needed, and drafts the unified budget for approval by the Trustee Board;
- The Facilities Coordinator or his/her designee oversees the use, maintenance and repairs of the building and equipment;
- The Security Coordinator or his/her designee oversees the maintenance and operation of the facility security and fire protection systems;
- The Treasurer signs the checks, reviews, and signs the Pastor's expense report and works closely with the Church Administrator and the Bookkeeper.

Trustee responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Develop a workable annual budget for the approved ministries after the Staff have made proposals;
- Develop the annual church budget and conduct the annual stewardship campaign to support the budget;
- Improve or repair facilities;
- Maintain proper insurance coverage;
- Manage endowment and trust funds.

**c. Elder Board (Spiritual Leadership)**

Elders are the spiritual shepherds of the Church. The Elder Board is responsible for making certain the mission and strategy of First Christian Church is being accomplished in the various ministries. This Board will consist of five (5) to eight (8) members from the congregation and the Senior/Lead Pastor. All members have voting rights.

After six (6) months of employment, a staff pastor (other than the Senior/Lead Pastor) may be considered for appointment to the elder board as a non-voting member. After one (1) year of service as a non-voting member, the pastor may be considered for election to a regular term (3 years) as a voting member.

At the beginning of each year, the board may decide to choose an Elder Emeritus and/or a leader-in-training to serve for one (1) year without voting rights.

Elder qualifications include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Be a baptized disciple of Jesus Christ
- Meet the qualifications (both skills and character traits) outlined in the New Testament (e.g., see Acts 20:17; 28-31; 1 Timothy 3:2-7; 5:17; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-2; James 5:14).
- Be fully committed to and actively participating in the mission and strategy of First Christian Church.
- Have been a member of First Christian Church for at least one year.
- Have volunteered in a significant capacity in a ministry, preferably in a leadership or mentoring role.
- Have the flexibility and availability to serve in the Elder role.
- Be able to keep confidential information.

The time commitment required can be delineated as a monthly meeting; occasional weekend retreats; approximately four to six hours per month for review of Elder board materials, policies, correspondence, and meeting preparation, and other time or service requirements when needs arise.

Elder responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Praying and planning for the needs and people of the Church;
- Setting an example to others in the Church in making disciples;
- Leading or participating in discipleship groups and other ministries;
- Receiving reports from the various ministries to see how they might support/encourage/challenge them;
- Mediating disputes within the congregation (according to Matthew 18:15-22);
- Deciding which theological stances the Church adopts;
- Visiting or calling Church members, especially home care members and hospitalized;
- Overseeing the Church's internal ministries and external outreach efforts;

- Overseeing the Church's involvement in support of local and global mission efforts.

If the Senior/Lead Pastor resigns or is dismissed, the Elders are responsible for supplying an Interim Pastor until the Pastor Search Team finds another Senior/Lead Pastor.

**d. Staff**

The pastoral staff serves the Church by providing spiritual leadership. The additional staff support the mission of the Church in their respective ministry areas.

Specific job descriptions or contracts for paid staff are contained in separate documents concerning each staff position.

**V. ADMINISTRATION OF SACRAMENTS**

- A. Communion: Communion is served at weekly services and is open to all believers in Jesus Christ. Any active Church member in good standing may serve as Communion Presider.
- B. Marriage: Policies concerning marriages that take place on the grounds of First Christian Church are provided in the Marriage Packet, which is distributed to all those who are interested. Church facilities will not be used for same-sex marriages based on our understanding of the biblical definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman.
- C. Water Baptism: Baptism will be administered to those who confess and repent of their sins, and place their complete trust in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38). First Christian Church practices baptism by immersion. Any disciple of Jesus can perform a baptism.

**VI. REVISIONS**

The Bylaws will be reviewed every three (3) years. A majority of votes cast by the representative board may revise these Bylaws in their particular area, pending approval by the Personnel Board. Any changes to the Bylaws will be communicated to the congregation at least four (4) weeks prior to the annual meeting.

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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, these bylaws have been signed, as of the day and year identified below.

Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

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Stan Sauer  
Elder Board Chair

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Hugh Rundell  
Trustee Board Chair

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Stan Sauer  
Personnel Board Chair