

Constitution of
First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Baltimore, Maryland

Adopted May 30, 1980
Effective July 1, 1981
Amended January 11, 1984

Preamble

We the members of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Baltimore, Maryland, in faithful response to the will and purposes of God as revealed through Jesus Christ and God's continuing revelation in the world, do hereby adopt this Constitution on this 30th day of May in the year of our Lord, 1980.

Article I: Name

The name of this congregation shall be First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Baltimore, Maryland, affiliated with and an integral part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

Article II: Statement of Purpose

The purposes of this congregation are: to seek to make known the love of God, His presence and His leadership in all of life; to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ; to win people to faith in Jesus Christ and commit them actively to the church; to serve the community of which it is a part; to bring the gospel message to bear upon society; to sustain and be sustained by the general regional manifestations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); to work cooperatively with Christians in other communions; and to seek the oneness of the body of Christ.

Article III: Membership

The membership of this congregation, as a part of the whole family of God on earth, shall consist of the following: Those who are now members of the congregation; those who shall unite with it by confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, giving expression of their faith through baptism and commitment to Him; and those who unite by transfer of membership.

Membership shall be defined as: Participating – those members who have been involved in any way during the last church year; and non-participating – those members who have not been involved in any way during the church year. Additional classifications may be defined in the By-Laws.

Article IV: Rights, Privileges, and Responsibilities of the Congregation

The congregation shall manage its affairs under the Lordship of Jesus Christ; determine its faithfulness to the gospel with respect to the basis of membership; own, control and encumber its property; organize and carry out the mission and witness of the congregation; establish its budgets and financial policies; call its minister and other staff; and participate, through voting representatives in regional and general

assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in forming the corporate judgments of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The congregation shall demonstrate voluntarily its mutual concern for the nurture, mission, and witness of the whole church, and among other responsibilities, it shall: proclaim the gospel; administer baptism and the Lord's Supper; provide for the spiritual nurture of its members; grow in understanding that the church is a universal fellowship; transcend all barriers within the human family such as race and culture; be faithful in Christian stewardship, striving to share proportionately in providing resources for the total life, work and witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): seek to realize the oneness of the church of Jesus Christ through cooperation with other churches of the community and with present and emerging ecumenical structures.

The congregation shall sustain its minister in faithfulness and honor, and in matters pertaining to relationships with the minister seek counsel from the executive regional minister.

The congregation shall exercise and enjoy all other rights, privileges and responsibilities requisite of appropriate to carrying out its purposes. Accordingly, it has the authority to review decisions made by the Official Board and alter such decisions if they are not acceptable to the congregation.

Article V: Officers, Official Board, Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, Trustees, Committees

Section A – Officers

The congregation shall elect from its members at a congregational meeting a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary. These officers shall serve as officers of the congregation and of the Official Board as set forth in the By-Laws.

The congregation shall also elect an Assistant Treasurer and an Assistant Financial Secretary who will not serve on the Official Board.

Section B – Official Board

The congregation shall have an Official Board, which shall be responsible to the congregation and have such authority as defined below and in the By-Laws to act on behalf of the congregation.

The Board shall be composed of members as set forth in the by-Laws and for terms of office stated therein. The size of the Board shall be no greater than twenty-four (24). All members of the Board shall be elected at a congregational meeting. However, vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term by nomination by the President, in consultation with the minister and election by the Official Board.

The board shall: be responsible for receiving reports from the minister, officers and the various committees and organizations with the congregation; establish, coordinate, and carry out programs as initiated by the congregation in planning session; initiate additional programs; recommend to the congregation for its approval an annual budget designed to underwrite the programs; report and make recommendations to the congregation concerning the welfare of the church and carry out such other responsibilities as may be defined in the By-Laws.

The Board shall not have the authority to purchase or sell real property, nor shall it have the authority to hire or terminate a minister without congregational approval.

Section C – Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses

The congregation shall elect elders, deacons, and deaconesses. Their election, qualifications, and responsibilities shall be as set forth in the By-Laws.

Section D – Trustees

The congregation shall elect trustees. Their election, qualifications, and responsibilities shall be as set forth in the By-Laws. They shall act as the legal agents of the congregation in all business matters, under the direction of the Official Board and subject to the approval of the congregation; hold legal title to all congregational property and handle as business transactions related thereto; including insurance coverage; have supervision over all endowments and trust funds; and perform such duties as are required by the laws of the State of Maryland.

Section E – Committees

The congregation, through its Official Board, shall establish standing committees and other organizations necessary for the conduct of the work of the congregation as set forth in the By-Laws.

Article VI: Congregational Meetings

Congregational meetings shall be held at least annually. Special meetings shall be held as required, such meetings to be called by the President or Vice-President, or upon request of the Official Board or written petition of at least twenty-five (25) participating members of the congregation. Congregational meetings shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order. Notice of all stated or special meetings shall be announced at a regular Sunday morning worship service of the congregation at least one week in advance of the meeting and by means of written notice sent by First Class mail and postmarked at least ten days before the meeting. Purpose, date, time, and place of the meeting shall be indicated in each notice. Each member shall be entitled to one vote, which must be cast in person.

Article VII: Amendments

This constitution may be amended at any congregational meeting by two-thirds vote of the members present and voting on the amendment, provided written notice of the proposed amendment has been sent through the mail to members of the congregation at least twenty (20) days prior to the time the vote is to be taken or the proposed amendment has been read at or following two successive Sunday morning worship services immediately prior to the time the vote is taken.