

## PREAMBLE

As members of the Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma  
We confess that Jesus is the Christ,  
the Son of the living God,  
and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world.

In Christ's name and by his grace  
we accept our mission of witness  
and service to all people.

We rejoice in God, maker of heaven and earth,  
and in the covenant of love  
which binds us to God and one another.

Through baptism into Christ  
we enter into newness of life  
and are made one with the whole people of God.

In the communion of the Holy Spirit  
we are joined together in discipleship  
and in obedience to Christ.

at the table of the Lord  
we celebrate with thanksgiving  
the saving acts and presence of Christ.

Within the universal church  
we receive the gift of ministry  
and the light of scripture.

In the bonds of Christian faith  
we yield ourselves to God  
that we may serve the One  
whose kingdom has no end.

Blessing, glory and honor  
be to God forever. Amen.

Adapted from the Preamble to  
*The Design for the Christian Church*  
(*Disciples of Christ*)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CONSTITUTION

Article I, Name .....	2
Article II, Purpose .....	2
Article III, Membership and Participation .....	2
Article IV, Relationships.....	2
Article V, Organization .....	3
Article VI, Congregations .....	4
Article VII, Amendments.....	5
Article VIII, Enactment and Repeal .....	5

### BY-LAWS

Article I, Regional Assembly .....	6
Article II, Regional Board .....	8
Article III, Regional Executive Committee .....	10
Article IV, Regional Officers.....	11
Article V, Regional Staff .....	12
Article VI, Regional Mission Planning Group.....	13
Article VII, Commissions.....	14
Article VIII, Regional Administration .....	16
Article IX, Regional Fellowships .....	21
Article X, Areas.....	22
Article XI, Parliamentary Procedure .....	23
Article XII, Amendments.....	23
Article XIII, Enactment and Repeal .....	23

# CONSTITUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN OKLAHOMA

## ARTICLE I NAME

- A. The name of this body shall be The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma, Inc. The body is incorporated under the laws of the State of Oklahoma and is the legal successor to The Oklahoma Association of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ).
- B. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma, hereinafter referred to as the "Regional Church," is an integral part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, hereinafter referred to as the "General Church."

## ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The purpose of the Regional Church:

- A. To extend the ministry of Christ through mission, witness, and service among the people and social structures of the Region.
- B. To establish, receive, and nurture congregations in the Region, providing help, counsel, and pastoral care to members, ministers, and congregations.
- C. To assist the three manifestations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—Congregational, Regional, and General—in relating to each other in the functioning of the whole Church.
- D. To witness to the oneness of the church of Jesus Christ through cooperation with other denominations and religious associations.

## ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

- A. The membership of the Regional Church shall consist of congregations within the Region which are listed in the latest Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and members of such congregations.

Congregations which follow the procedures for listing after the publication of the latest Year Book and Directory and are recorded in the Year Book and Directory office shall also be included in the membership of the Regional Church, as shall members of such congregations.

- B. The Regional Church shall determine procedures of recognition whereby other persons and groups in the Region who support the purposes of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may participate in Regional and General ministry.

## ARTICLE IV RELATIONSHIPS

- A. The Regional Church shall, in pursuit of its purpose, share its ministry and mission in relationship with others. These relationships include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - 1. The General Church

2. Specific institutions of higher education of the General Church:
    - a. Phillips Theological Seminary
  3. Specific National Benevolent Association (NBA) Centers of the General Church:
    - a. NBA Disciples' Village—Tulsa
    - b. NBA Meadows Point Apartments—Enid
    - c. NBA Oklahoma Christian Retirement Community—Edmond
    - d. NBA Oklahoma Disciples Apartments—Edmond
    - e. NBA Oklahoma Christian Apartments—Edmond
    - f. NBA Roscoe Dunjee Senior Living Center (I & II)—Spencer
    - g. NBA St. Louis Christian Home/ECHO Emergency Children's Home—St. Louis
  4. Oklahoma Disciples Foundation, Inc.
  5. "Associated Groups" organized among members of the Regional Church for fellowship or other purposes appropriate to the spirit and practices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). A list of such groups shall be approved biennially by the Regional Board.
  6. Ecumenical bodies in the Region:
    - a. Oklahoma Commission for United Ministries in Higher Education.
    - b. Oklahoma Conference of Churches.
    - c. United Lake Ministries.
    - d. The Interfaith Alliance
- B. The Regional Church shall, in its Bylaws, define the representatives through whom relationships shall be officially maintained with each body named in Section A of this Article and shall make provision for the granting of recognition to other bodies.

Neither the existence of an officially maintained relationship nor the granting of relationship shall in itself create the assumption of legal responsibilities. These relationships are defined herein for the sole purpose of expressing a shared vision of ministry and mission.

## **ARTICLE V ORGANIZATION**

- A. The major decision-making bodies of the Regional Church shall be:
  1. A Regional Assembly.
  2. A Regional Board.
  3. A Regional Executive Committee.
- B. The work and program of the Regional Church shall, with the assistance of an employed Regional Staff, be accomplished through leadership from within the Region.

- C. Within the Region, geographical areas, established by the Regional Church and known as "Areas", shall function as integral parts of the Regional Church, relating the congregations within their boundaries to each other and to the Regional manifestation of the church.
- D. Within Areas or across Area lines, "Clusters" of congregations, based upon proximity, common concerns, shared objectives, or other pertinent considerations, may be formed or dissolved by congregations, Areas, or the Regional Church with the approval of the Regional Staff.

## **ARTICLE VI CONGREGATIONS**

### A. Recognition

- 1. Recognized congregations in the Region shall be those listed in the latest Year Book and Directory.

Congregations which follow the procedures for listing after the publication of the latest Year Book and Directory and are recorded in the Year Book and Directory office shall also be recognized congregations.

- 2. Other congregations desiring recognition in the Regional Church shall follow established procedures for Year Book and Directory listing as specified in *The Design* and shall comply with guidelines for the recognition of churches as established by the Regional Board.
- 3. Congregations desiring to withdraw from recognition in the Regional Church shall follow established procedures for deletion from Year Book and Directory listing as specified in *The Design*.

### B. Covenantal Relationships

As manifestations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), congregations share in a covenantal relationship with one another and with the Regional and General manifestations of the Church. It is recognized that this covenantal relationship is free and voluntary.

### C. Rights [adapted from *The Design*]

Congregations shall have the specific right:

- 1. To manage their affairs under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- 2. To adopt or retain their names and charters or constitutions and bylaws.
- 3. To determine in faithfulness to the Gospel their practice with respect to the basis of membership.
- 4. To own, control, and encumber their property.
- 5. To organize for carrying out the mission and witness of the Church.
- 6. To establish their budgets and financial policies.
- 7. To call and dismiss their ministers.
- 8. To send voting representatives to Area, Regional, and General Assemblies.

It is understood that congregations shall enjoy and exercise all other rights consonant with the spirit and practices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

D. Responsibilities [adapted from *The Design*]

Congregations may voluntarily demonstrate their concern for mission and witness of the whole church by accepting the responsibility:

1. To proclaim the Gospel and administer baptism and the Lord's Supper.
2. To provide for the spiritual nurture of their members.
3. To grow in understanding that the church is a universal fellowship, transcending all barriers within the human family, such as race, gender, and culture.
4. To sustain their ministers in faithfulness and honor and, in matters pertaining to relationships with them, to seek counsel from the Regional Pastor.
5. To be faithful in Christian stewardship, striving to share proportionately in providing the resources for the total life, work, and witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
6. To choose voting representatives to Area, Regional, and General Assemblies.
7. To witness to the oneness of the church of Jesus Christ through cooperation with other churches of the community and with present and emerging ecumenical structures.

Congregations may further demonstrate their concern by voluntarily assuming other responsibilities appropriate to the spirit and practices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

#### **ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any Biennial Regional Assembly by a three-fourths affirmative vote of those persons present who are privileged to vote and actually voting, provided that the proposed amendment:

- A. Has been reviewed by the Constitution Committee and the Regional Board.
- B. Has been published in *The Oklahoma Christian* not less than three months prior to the Biennial Regional Assembly at which it is to be voted upon.
- C. Has been submitted to the Regional Assembly with the recommendation of the Regional Board that the amendments be approved, disapproved, or referred to a designated body for investigation or study.

#### **ARTICLE VIII ENACTMENT AND REPEAL**

- A. This Constitution shall be in effect immediately following the Biennial Regional Assembly at which it has received a three-fourths affirmative vote of those persons present and who are privileged to vote and actually voting.
- B. All articles and provisions of any previous Constitution are hereby repealed upon the effective date of this Constitution.

**BYLAWS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN OKLAHOMA**

**ARTICLE I  
REGIONAL CHURCH ASSEMBLY**

A. Membership

All members of the Regional Church who register for the Biennial Regional Church Assembly shall have all privileges of the Assembly except that voting privileges shall be limited to:

1. Voting representatives from the congregations, representation to be based upon participating membership as reported in the latest Year Book and Directory.
  - a. Each congregation shall be entitled to three lay voting representatives plus one additional lay voting representative for each three hundred members or major fraction thereof over the first three hundred.
  - b. Each congregation, in selecting its representatives, shall seek to maintain a balance of lay men, lay women, and youth.
2. Ordained and commissioned ministers in the Regional Church whose ministerial standing is certified by the Regional Church.
3. Persons who hold one of the following positions:
  - a. President of Phillips Theological Seminary
  - b. President of Oklahoma Disciples Foundation, Inc.
4. Disciples Retirement Community of Oklahoma (DRCO) Representative

Voting members of the Regional Church Board who are not otherwise voting representatives to the Biennial Regional Church Assembly.

Members of the Regional Church Staff who are not otherwise voting representatives to the Biennial Regional Church Assembly.

B. Meetings

1. The Regional Church Assembly shall normally meet every second year, alternately with the Biennial General Assembly, at a time and place approved at the preceding Biennial Regional Church Assembly, upon recommendation of the Regional Church Executive Committee through the Recommendations and Credentials Committee.
2. Under extraordinary circumstances, a special meeting of the Regional Church Assembly may be called by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Regional Church Board, provided that at least sixty days' notice is given through *The Oklahoma Christian*, emailed or mailed to each congregation.
3. A quorum shall be forty percent of the voting members certified by the Recommendations and Credentials Committee as registered and present at the Assembly.
4. A simple majority of those persons present, who are privileged to vote and actually voting, at any meeting shall be sufficient to adopt a properly presented motion or business item, except that, as otherwise provided:

- a. A three-fourths majority shall be required to amend the Constitution (see Article VII of the Constitution).
- b. A two-thirds majority shall be required to call, re-elect, or dismiss the Regional Church Pastor(see Article V, Section B of these Bylaws).

C. Duties

1. To establish priorities and practices of the Regional Church.
2. To provide Assembly programs for worship, education, fellowship, and the transaction of business for the Regional Church.
3. To elect the following:
  - a. Officers of the Regional Church: Moderator-Elect, First Vice Moderator, Second Vice Moderator, and Secretary/Treasurer.
  - b. Four Members-At-Large to the Regional Church Board.
  - c. Voting representatives to the General Assembly, in accordance with *The Design*.
  - d. Oklahoma member of the General Board, in accordance with *The Design*.
  - e. Delegates or representatives to related ecumenical bodies in the Regional Church (see Article IV, Section A6 of the Constitution) in accordance with the bylaws of those bodies.
4. To confirm the appointments made by specific bodies within the structure of the Regional Church which, in accordance with their own bylaws, select members of the Regional Church to serve on their boards.
5. To receive reports from:
  - a. Regional Church Staff
  - b. Phillips Theological Seminary
  - c. Disciples Retirement Community of Oklahoma, Inc.
  - d. Oklahoma Disciples Foundation, Inc.
  - e. Oklahoma Commission for United Ministries in Higher Education
  - f. Oklahoma Conference of Churches
  - g. Other bodies within or related to the Regional Church wishing to report to the Regional Church Assembly
6. To grant recognition to bodies requesting relationship with the Regional Church, upon recommendation of the Regional Church Board.
7. To call, reelect, or dismiss the Regional Church Pastor, upon recommendation of the Regional Church Board.
8. To amend the Constitution of the Regional Church.

**ARTICLE II**



## **REGIONAL CHURCH BOARD**

### **A. Membership**

Voting members:

1. Elected officers of the Regional Church, as defined in Article IV, Section A of these Bylaws (6).
2. Moderators of each Area (5).
3. Chairperson of each Commission (6).
4. Four Members-At-Large elected by the Regional Church Assembly (4).
5. One representative from each Area (5).
6. One representative from each Fellowship Group (3).
7. One member of the United Church of Christ.

Non-voting members:

1. Regional Church Pastor or designee.
2. Parliamentarian of the Regional Church.
3. Chair of Budget Committee.
4. Chair of Personnel Committee.
5. Chair of Communication Committee.

### **B. Term of Office**

1. A term of office on the Regional Church Board shall be two years.
2. Beginning of term:
  - a. The term of office shall begin July 1.
2. Regulations governing terms:
  - a. Officers and at-large board members shall serve one term and then shall not be eligible to serve again in the same position until two years have elapsed.
  - b. The term of the Parliamentarian shall coincide with that of the Moderator who made the appointment.
  - c. A Parliamentarian may serve under consecutive Moderators, subject to the limitation defined in the next paragraph, Item 3d of this Section.
  - d. No person shall serve more than eight consecutive years on the Regional Church Board except the Regional Church Pastor or designee.

- ### **C. Vacancies among the Regional Church Board members shall be filled by the Regional Church Executive Committee in consultation with the Regional Church Staff.**

#### D. Meetings

1. Normally two meetings of the Regional Church Board shall be held each year.
2. Special meetings may be called by the Regional Church Executive Committee.
3. A petition signed by at least ten members of the Regional Church Board shall require that the Regional Church Executive Committee call a special meeting. Meetings of the Regional Church Board shall be open to all members of the Regional Church except when the Board votes by a two-thirds majority to meet in closed session.
4. A quorum shall be a simple majority of the voting members of the Board.
5. A simple majority of Board members present, who are privileged to vote and actually voting, at any meeting shall be sufficient to adopt a properly presented motion or resolution, except that, as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, a two-thirds majority shall be required:
  - a. To call a special Regional Church Assembly (see Article I, Section B2).
  - b. To close a session of the Regional Church Board to all persons except members of the Board (see Item 3 of this Section).
  - c. To recommend to the Regional Church Assembly the call, re-election, or dismissal of the Regional Church Pastor (see Article V, Section B1).
  - d. To amend the Bylaws (see Article XIII).

#### E. Duties

1. To manage the business and affairs of the Regional Church.
2. To establish procedures for implementing priorities determined by the Regional Church Assembly and to establish policies for the Regional Church.
3. To maintain the *"Guidelines for Acceptance of an Existing Church into the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma"* on file at the Oklahoma Disciples Center.
4. To determine the number of Areas and their boundaries.
5. To call special meetings of the Regional Church Assembly.
6. To recommend to the Regional Church Assembly the granting of recognition to bodies requesting relationship with the Regional Church.
7. To recommend to the Regional Church Assembly the call, re-election, or dismissal of the Regional Church Pastor, upon recommendation of the Regional Church Executive Committee.
8. To call or dismiss members of the Regional Church Pastoral Staff upon recommendation of the Regional Church Executive Committee.
9. To recommend to the Regional Church Assembly the approval, disapproval, or referral or proposed amendments to the Constitution.
10. To amend the Bylaws of the Regional Church.

**ARTICLE III  
REGIONAL CHURCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

A. Membership

Elected officers.

Regional Church Pastor or designee (without vote).

Moderators of each Area.

4. Parliamentarian (without vote).

B. Duties

1. The Regional Church Executive Committee shall be authorized to transact business on behalf of the Regional Church between meetings of the Regional Church Board. Actions taken shall normally be within established policies of the Regional Church Board and shall be subject to review by the Board at its next meeting.

a. To appoint chairs of commissions in consultation with Regional Church Staff.

b. To authorize additional committees and task forces to meet needs as they arise.

2. To confirm:

a. The appointments of Regional Church commission and committee members in consultation with Regional Church Staff.

b. The appointment of the Parliamentarian by the Moderator.

3. To fill vacancies among the Regional Church Board members as specified in Article II, Section C1 of these Bylaws.

4. To receive and act upon requests of commissions.

5. To review annually the report of the Personnel Committee concerning relationships and salaries of all employed personnel.

6. To receive and review all plans and proposals submitted by the Regional Church Mission Planning Group and other reporting bodies and to make any appropriate recommendations concerning them to the Regional Church Board.

7. To review audits and budget requests and to make recommendations concerning them to the Regional Church Board.

8. To recommend to the Regional Church Board the call, re-election, or dismissal of the Regional Church Pastor.

9. To recommend to the Regional Church Board the call or dismissal of Regional Church Pastoral Staff members.

**ARTICLE IV  
REGIONAL CHURCH OFFICERS**

A. Membership

Moderator

Moderator-Elect

First Vice Moderator

Second Vice Moderator

Secretary/Treasurer

Parliamentarian

B. Election and Term of Officers

1. All officers except the Parliamentarian shall be elected by the Regional Church Assembly. The Parliamentarian shall be appointed by the Moderator, with the approval of the Regional Church Executive Committee.

2. Elected officers shall serve a term of two years, beginning July 1. No officer shall be eligible to serve again in the same office until two years have elapsed. The term of the Parliamentarian shall coincide with that of the Moderator who made the appointment.

A Parliamentarian may serve under consecutive Moderators, subject to the limitations defined in Article II, Section B3d of these Bylaws.

C. Vacancies

Vacancies among elected officers shall be filled by the Regional Church Executive Committee, in consultation with Regional Church Staff.

D. Duties

1. Moderator

a. Shall preside at all business sessions of the Regional Church Assembly, the Regional Church Board, the Regional Church Executive Committee, and, unless other arrangements are made, of the Regional Church Mission Planning Group.

b. Shall appoint the Parliamentarian, with the approval of the Regional Church Executive Committee.

c. Shall, in consultation with the Moderator-Elect, appoint a Recommendations and Credentials Committee to serve the Biennial Regional Church Assembly.

d. Shall perform other duties usually associated with the office.

2. In the absence of the Moderator, the Moderator-Elect and Vice Moderators, in consecutive order, shall preside in the Moderator's place.

3. The First Vice Moderator shall serve as Chairperson of the Biennial Regional Church Assembly Task Force.

4. The Second Vice Moderator shall serve as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee and the Recommendations and Credentials Committee.

5. The Vice Moderators shall share in presiding over the sessions of the Biennial Regional Church

Assembly and shall, by mutual agreement, perform during the term of office such other duties as the Moderator may request.

6. The Secretary/Treasurer shall keep the minutes of the business meetings of the Regional Church Assembly, the Regional Church Board, the Regional Church Executive Committee, and the Regional Church Mission Planning Group. The Secretary/Treasurer shall work with the Financial Administrator of the Regional Church, the Regional Church Budget Committee and arrange for an audit of the financial resources of the Regional Church for the fiscal year (January 1 through December 31).
7. The Parliamentarian shall rule on matters of parliamentary procedure at business meetings of the Regional Church Assembly and the Regional Church Board (see Article XII of these Bylaws) and shall serve on the Recommendations and Credentials Committee.

## **ARTICLE V REGIONAL CHURCH STAFF**

### **A. Membership**

1. Regional Church Pastor
2. Associate Regional Church Pastors
3. Other staff as deemed necessary

### **B. Call, Re-election, and Dismissal**

1. The Regional Church Pastor shall be called, re-elected, or dismissed by the Regional Church Assembly, upon recommendation of the Regional Church Executive Committee through the Regional Church Board. In the nomination, call, re-election, or dismissal of the Regional Church Pastor, a two-thirds affirmative vote of those persons present, who are privileged to vote and actually voting, shall be required in the Regional Church Executive Committee, Regional Church Board, and the Regional Church Assembly, respectively.
2. Other Regional Church Pastoral Staff members shall be called or dismissed by the Regional Church Board, upon recommendation of the Regional Church Executive Committee.

### **C. Term, Retirement, and Termination**

1. The Regional Church Pastor shall be elected for a term of six years and may be re-elected for subsequent terms.
2. Termination of all other Regional Church Staff members shall be in accordance with the latest *"Employee Policies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma,"* on file at the Oklahoma Disciples Center.

### **D. Vacancies**

1. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Regional Church Pastor, the Regional Church Board shall choose a person to fill the vacancy until the Regional Church Assembly elects a new Regional Church Pastor.
2. Other vacancies among Regional Church Pastoral Staff members shall be filled as indicated in Section B2 of this Article.

A. Duties

1. The Regional Church Pastor

- a. Shall exercise ministries of oversight, pastoral care, and nurture among congregations and ministers of the Regional Church, assisting them with program-resourcing, mission interpretation, and procedures of Search and Call.
- b. Shall fulfill responsibilities with the General Church and shall, in ways appropriate to the office, represent the Regional Church in ecumenical circles.
- c. Shall, as chief executive officer of the Regional Church, serve as its legally authorized agent in financial, business, and legal transactions.
- d. Shall employ personnel necessary for the operation of the Regional Church.

2. The Associate Regional Church Pastors, under the direction of the Regional Church Pastor, share in program-resourcing and in the spiritual, pastoral, and administrative care of the Regional Church.

3. In case of the illness or incapacity of the Regional Church Pastor, following consultation with the Regional Church Executive Committee, an Associate Regional Church Pastor shall assume the duties of that office.

**ARTICLE VI  
REGIONAL CHURCH MISSION PLANNING GROUP**

A. Purpose

To focus the mission of the Regional Church, including development of current and long-range priorities, goals, and objectives.

To enable all persons in the Regional Church to establish a sense of partnership and to receive inspiration and ideas from each other.

To help persons, congregations, areas, and Regional Church entities claim, foster, and celebrate a common vision of the mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma.

B. Membership

1. Regional Church Executive Committee
2. Pastoral Staff
3. Commission chairs or their designee and one other representative of each commission
4. Area Moderators or their designee and one other representative of each Area
5. Chair of Regional Church Budget Committee
6. Chair of Regional Church Communication Committee

7. Representatives of Disciples Retirement Community of Oklahoma (DRCO), Phillips Theological Seminary, Regional Church Campsites, and the Oklahoma Commission for United Ministries in Higher Education
  8. Other special invited guests as determined by the Regional Church Executive Committee.
- C. Meetings
1. At least two meetings shall be held annually.
    - a. An evaluation meeting in winter to assess implementation of previous planning and to set in motion the information gathering phase of the next planning meeting.
    - b. A mission planning meeting in late summer or early fall to determine priorities, goals and objectives for the next biennium.
  2. Meetings of the Mission Planning Group shall be called by the Regional Church Moderator in consultation with Regional Church Staff.
- D. Duties
1. To receive input from all manifestations of the church and in light of that input establish priorities, goals, objectives, and calendar for the work of the Regional Church for a biennium.
  2. To evaluate current and future programming in light of priorities, goals, objectives and make recommendations for necessary changes to the Regional Church Executive Committee.
  3. To coordinate the content and calendar of programs carried on by commissions and other Regional Church program groups.
  4. To provide opportunities for commissions and other entities to discover ways to engage in cooperative endeavors.

## **ARTICLE VII COMMISSIONS**

A. Purpose

The purpose of Commissions is to facilitate, strengthen, and engage the life of the Regional Church.

B. Organization

1. There shall be six commissions:
  - a. Commission on Clergy
  - b. Commission on Laity
  - c. Commission on Faith in Action
  - d. Commission on Children, Youth, & Young Adult Ministries
  - e. Commission on Evangelism
  - f. Commission on Worship and Spiritual Growth

2. The Regional Church Executive Committee shall, within established policy of the Regional Church Board, have the authority to appoint the chair of each commission in consultation with Regional Church Staff. A Regional Church Staff person will be assigned to each Commission.

C. The Commissions

1. Commission on Clergy

- a. To grant or revoke standing to ministers in concert with the "*Policies and Criteria of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada*" and the "*Policies and Criteria of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma*" as determined by the Regional Church.
- b. To provide help, counsel, and pastoral care in such matters as ordination and licensing.
- c. To encourage enlistment of candidates for the ministry and to be supportive of candidates in preparation for the ministry.
- d. To be concerned for such matters as continuing education, emergency financial assistance, personal and professional crises, etc., and to assist the Regional Church Pastoral Staff, as requested, in the area of pastoral care.

2. Commission on Laity

- a. To provide educational and training events, Christian education resourcing for congregations, and to encourage networking to share ministries and resources.
- b. To provide opportunities for development of leadership skills.
- c. To provide resources that assist in developing a responsive program structure in the congregation, including mission identification and strategic planning.
- d. A representative from Oklahoma Disciples Women and Oklahoma Disciples Men will serve on the Commission to coordinate programming, provide resources, and facilitate communication and participation in the mission of the Regional Church.

3. Commission on Faith in Action

- a. To take the initiative in developing new forms of ministry in mission, witness, and service.
- b. To increase sensitivity to the needs of the world and to assist individuals and congregations in identifying and serving such needs.
- c. To educate persons and congregations concerning stewardship and outreach.
- d. To cooperate, as appropriate, with similar bodies in other denominations in fulfilling the mission of the church of Jesus Christ.

4. Commission on Children, Youth, & Young Adult Ministries

- a. To design "faith based, faith exploring" camps and conferences, and other events for children, youth, and young adults.
- b. To select, negotiate, and schedule the use of adequate, safe facilities.
- c. To select, train, and support qualified directors.
- d. To offer training for experienced and potential counselors.



- e. To select and secure appropriate curricula.
  - f. To oversee and evaluate all events for children, youth, and young adults sponsored or co-sponsored by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma.
  - g. To secure promotional materials and publicity for all events sponsored by or related to the Commission on Children, Youth, and Young Adults Ministries.
  - h. To welcome a representative, usually the President, of the Regional Church Youth Council as a full voting member of the Commission in order to coordinate programming, provide resources, and facilitate communication and participation in the mission of the Regional Church.
5. Commission on Evangelism
- a. To help individuals and congregations develop appropriate and successful methods of evangelism through training and program opportunities.
  - b. To provide initiative and direction for Regional Church-wide evangelism efforts.
  - c. Establishment of new congregations.
6. Commission on Worship and Spiritual Growth
- a. To plan opportunities for the churches of the Regional Church to come together for worship and fellowship, including the Biennial Regional Church Assembly.
  - b. To provide opportunities, through resources and programs, for personal and congregational growth and enrichment in the areas of worship, fellowship, and spiritual growth.
  - c. To help all members of the Regional Church better understand the history, traditions, and foci of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

**ARTICLE VIII  
REGIONAL CHURCH ADMINISTRATION**

A. Administrative Committees

1. Budget Committee

- a. Membership
  - 1) Chairperson, appointed by Regional Church Executive Committee
  - 2) Regional Church Secretary/Treasurer
  - 3) Three persons appointed by Regional Church Executive Committee
  - 4) Regional Church Moderator (without vote)
  - 5) Regional Church Pastor (without vote)
  - 6) Financial Administrator (without vote)
- b. Duties

- 1) To receive and review budget requests from:
    - (a) Personnel Committee (for pastoral and office staff salaries and benefits)
    - (b) Commissions, committees, Regional Church campsites, and Regional Church fellowships (for program funding and scholarships)
    - (c) Areas
    - (d) Related ecumenical bodies in the Regional Church (see Article IV, Section A6 of the Constitution)
  - 2) To prepare the annual budget of the Regional Church and to present it to the Regional Church Executive Committee and the Regional Church Board for approval.
  - (3) To propose to the Regional Church Executive Committee any budget adjustments throughout the year as required by actual income.
2. Personnel Committee
    - a. Membership
      - 1) Chairperson, appointed by the Regional Church Executive Committee.
      - 2) Three other members (one minister and two lay members). One member shall have served on the Personnel Committee the preceding term.
      - 3) Moderator (without vote).
      - 4) Regional Church Pastor (without vote).
    - b. Duties
      - 1) To serve as a pastoral-relations committee to pastoral and office staff.
      - 2) To review, annually, the latest *"Employee Policies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma,"* on file at the Oklahoma Disciples Center.
      - 3) To make recommendations to the Budget Committee concerning salaries and benefits for pastoral and office staff members.
  3. Communication Committee
    - a. Chair and membership shall be appointed by the Regional Church Executive Committee.
    - b. Duties
      - 1) To help the Regional Church develop creative and effective communication processes.
      - 2) To aid commissions, sub-commissions, task forces, and other bodies within the Regional Church in developing creative and effective communication.
      - 3) To develop and/or to provide resources to congregations to aid them in improving their communication skills.
  4. Nominating Committee
    - a. Membership

- 1) Second Vice Moderator, Chairperson
- 2) Two representatives from each Area, chosen by the Area
- 3) Regional Church Staff representative (without vote)

b. Duties

- 1) To nominate one person for each position to be filled by vote of the Regional Church Assembly.
- 2) To gather names and recommend to the Regional Church Executive Committee persons to serve on commissions.
- 3) To present to the Regional Church Assembly, for confirmation, the appointments made by bodies within the Regional Church structure, in accordance with their own bylaws, and to select members of the Regional Church to serve on their boards.
- 4) In their work, the Nominating Committee shall strive to attain balanced representation within the Regional Church.

c. Procedures

- 1) The Committee shall make one nomination for each position to be filled.
- 2) The list of nominees shall be published in *The Oklahoma Christian*, emailed, or mailed to all congregations at least sixty days before the opening of the Biennial Regional Church Assembly.
- 3) Other names may be placed in nomination for any of the positions to be filled, provided that such nominations have been approved by at least twenty-five persons representing at least five congregations, that persons so nominated have consented to serve if elected, and that such nominations have been submitted to the Oklahoma Disciples Center at least thirty days before the opening of the Assembly.
- 4) Election shall be by ballot when two or more persons have been nominated for the same position, unless one person receives a majority of all votes cast, the two names receiving the highest number of votes shall be presented for a final vote.

5. Recommendations and Credentials Committee

a. Membership

- 1) Second Vice Moderator, Chairperson
- 2) Two representatives from each Area, chosen by the Area
- 3) Regional Church Staff representation (without vote)
- 4) Parliamentarian (without vote)

b. Duties

- 1) To receive and review any reports submitted by bodies listed in Article I, Section C5 of these bylaws.

- 2) To receive, review, evaluate, and edit properly submitted business items as specified in the *"Special Rules of Procedure for the Regional Church Assembly."* Editing shall be for clarity and conciseness and may include the combining of two or more business items with similar intent and the drafting of a substitute business item, provided that the substituted or amended business item is accompanied by the original business item(s) when presented to the Regional Church Assembly for consideration.
- 3) To present properly submitted business items to the Regional Church Assembly for action with a recommendation in each case to approve, disapprove, or refer to a designated body for investigation or study.
- 4) To rule on the validity of emergency business items submitted after the sixty day deadline and to deal with them accordingly.
- 5) To revise any business items recommitted to it by action of the Regional Church Assembly and to present its revisions and recommendations at a subsequent business session of the same Assembly.
- 6) To certify that voting representatives to the Biennial Regional Church Assembly have been properly accredited.
- 7) To determine the means by which voting members shall be identified at the Assembly.
- 8) To certify, at the Assembly, the number of voting members registered and present to determine the number required to constitute a quorum (see Article I, Section 83 of these Bylaws).

c. Procedures

- 1) To be considered properly submitted, business items:
  - (a) Must be received by the Regional Church at least sixty days before the opening of the Biennial Regional Church Assembly, except in the case of valid emergency business items, which must be submitted at least twenty-four hours before the closing business session of the Assembly.
  - (b) Must come from one of the following sources:
    - (1) Recognized congregations in the Regional Church by congregational or board action.
    - (2) At least 15 members of the Regional Church or responsible groups within recognized congregations, with the business item approved in writing by at least one recognized congregation in the Regional Church.
    - (3) Areas by action of their Assemblies or Boards.
    - (4) The Regional Church Executive Committee, Regional Church Board, Regional Church Commissions, or other such bodies within or related to the Regional Church.
    - (5) Units or auxiliary organizations of the General Church.
    - (6) The Recommendations and Credentials Committee.
- 2) All business items (other than emergency business items) to come before the

Regional Church Assembly shall be published in *The Oklahoma Christian*, e-mailed or mailed to all congregations at least thirty days before the opening of the Assembly.

- 3) Business items reported to the Regional Church Assembly may be approved, Disapproved, referred to a designated body, or recommitted to the Recommendations and Credentials Committee. No business item shall be amended on the floor of the Assembly.
- B. Commissions (See Article VII of these Bylaws)
  - C. Establishment of other committees, commissions, sub-commissions, and task forces.
    1. The Regional Church Executive Committee shall have the authority to establish additional committees and commissions to fulfill the purposes of the Regional Church.
    2. Task Forces may be established by the Regional Church Executive Committee, a commission, or a committee. Task forces shall assume responsibility for special projects, programs, or concerns which are not of an ongoing nature.
    3. Sub-commissions may be established only by commissions with the approval of the Regional Church Executive Committee.
  - D. Chairpersons of committees, commissions, sub-commissions, and task forces.
    1. Appointment
      - a. Chairpersons of committees shall be appointed by the Regional Church Executive Committee, with the exception of those chaired by Moderators of the Regional Church.
      - b. Chairpersons of commissions and sub-commissions shall be selected by the commissions in consultation with Regional Church Staff and shall be persons with at least one year experience on the commission or sub-commission to be chaired. Appointments shall be made by the Regional Church Executive Committee.
      - c. Task force chairs shall be appointed by the body creating the task force and shall be a member of the appointing body.
    2. Term of office

Chairpersons of all committees, commissions, and sub-commissions shall be appointed for a term of three years. They may serve only one term and then shall not be eligible to serve again in the same position until two years have elapsed, with the exception of committees chaired by Regional Church Moderators. Terms shall begin July 1.
    3. Vacancies
      - a. Vacancies among chairpersons of all committees shall be filled by the Regional Church Executive Committee.
      - b. Vacancies among chairpersons of commissions shall be selected by the commission in consultation with Regional Church Staff and affirmed by the Regional Church Executive Committee.
      - c. Vacancies among sub-commission chairs shall be filled by the commission creating the sub-commission.
      - d. Vacancies among task force chairs shall be filled by the entity creating the task force.

1. To develop its own organizational structure.
2. To elect officers in accordance with its bylaws or rules of procedure.
3. To act as a program-planning body in the area of church life and work for which it exists.
4. To coordinate and schedule its work and program with those of the Regional Church organization.
5. To promote and implement at Regional Church, area, and local levels the purpose of the fellowship as set forth in its bylaws or rules of procedure.

## **ARTICLE X AREAS**

### A. Purpose

An Area of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma has been designated by the Regional Church Board as an entity that enables congregations and Regional Church to accomplish ministry and mission through fellowship, mutual support, and cooperative effort.

### B. Duties

It shall be the duty of each Area to:

1. Meet at least annually in an Area gathering for fellowship, education, and worship and to:
2. Elect officers to serve the specific needs of the area including, but not limited to, the following:
  - a. Moderator
  - b. Moderator-Elect
  - c. Secretary/Treasurer

Officers normally serve for two years, with the Moderator-Elect assuming the office of Moderator for an additional two years. The Moderator represents the Area on the Regional Church Board and the Regional Church Board Executive Committee. The Moderator-Elect normally represents the Area on the Regional Church Board and the Mission Planning Group.

### C. Select two representative to each of the following:

- a. Mission Planning Group, Regional Church Nominating Committee, Regional Church Recommendations and Credentials Committee.
- b. Develop additional organizational structure in harmony with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Regional Church, i.e. Area Cabinet or Board.
- c. Encourage participation in the Regional Church. Provide names to the Regional Church Nominating Committee through the Area Representative of qualified persons interested in serving on the Regional Church Board and/or other Regional Church bodies such as commissions, committees, and task forces.

- d. Accomplish ministry and mission priorities developed by the Regional Church Board.
- e. To cooperate, as appropriate, in the forming or dissolving of clusters of congregations within the area or across area lines.

**ARTICLE XI  
PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

Parliamentary procedure in business sessions of the Regional Church shall be governed by the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except when there is a conflict with these Bylaws, and then the Bylaws shall take precedence.

**ARTICLE XII  
AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Regional Church Board by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the board members present, who are privileged to vote and actually voting, provided that the amendment:

- A. Has been reviewed by the Constitution and Bylaws Task Force.
- B. Has been presented at a previous regular meeting of the Board with the recommendation of the Constitution and Bylaws Task Force that the amendment be approved, disapproved, or referred to a designated body for investigation or study.
- C. Has been submitted in writing to members of the Board at least sixty days prior to the meeting at which it is to be voted upon.

**ARTICLE XIII  
ENACTMENT AND REPEAL**

- A. These Bylaws shall be in effect immediately following the Biennial Regional Church Assembly at which they have received a two-thirds affirmative vote of those persons present who are privileged to vote and actually voting.
- B. All articles and provisions of any previous Bylaws are hereby repealed upon the effective date of these Bylaws.

*Approved September 30, 1995  
Amended April 18, 1998  
Amended September 16, 2000  
Amended September 21, 2002  
Amended April 23, 2010*