

CONSTITUTION

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF BREMERTON, WASHINGTON

ARTICLE I

Name and Purpose

Section A – Name. Name and Purpose

The name of this organization shall be FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF BREMERTON, WASHINGTON, INC., affiliated with The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and committed to the historic principles of this body whose local congregations are variously known as Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, or Disciples of Christ.

Section B – Purpose.

First Christian Church of Bremerton is a diverse group of people seeking to respond to the vision of God's purpose revealed through Jesus Christ.

We believe this vision calls us to be an intentional community which engages persons in Christian practices. These practices include the Lord's Supper, joyful worship, Bible study, prayer service, and inclusive hospitality. We are called to be open to all people, discerning how we can respond to needs within and beyond our Congregation. As a community, we will listen to and bear one another's burdens, and work on behalf of justice for all God's people.

ARTICLE II

Membership

Membership in this Congregation is open to any person who wishes to participate in this fellowship and accept responsibility for support of its programs by stewardship of their time, talent, and monetary resources. Members shall strengthen the life and fellowship of this Congregation by some act of identifiable participation on a regular basis.

The official membership shall consist of:

Persons who have, by verbal statement, accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and have been baptized. Baptism, as practiced by this Congregation, shall be by immersion unless there is a reason that prevents immersion.

Persons requesting transfer from another church who have been baptized by that church's accepted method and confirmed in their faith, and who reaffirm their faith in Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE III

Officers

Section A – Church Council

The First Christian Church of Bremerton shall be governed by a Church Council, subject to the direction of the Congregation. The Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Church Council shall be one and the same as those officers of the Congregation. The Church By-Laws shall establish the duties and responsibilities assigned to the Church Council, frequency of meeting, provide for selection of additional Church Council officers, and provide for the establishment of various functional ministries that will serve the Congregation.

Section B – Officers, Terms of Office, and Duties of the Church Council.

The following officers shall be elected by the Church membership at its Annual Congregational Business Meeting for a term as designated for each office.

Chair.

Term of one year, limited to three consecutive terms. The officeholder may be re-elected after a lapse of one year.

Duties:

Fulfill the usual duties of such office including call and preside at all regular or special business meetings of the congregation.

Serve as Chair of the Church Council.

Vice-Chair.

Term of one year, limited to three consecutive terms. The officeholder may be re-elected after a lapse of one year.

Duties:

Fulfill the usual duties of such an officer, including call and preside at all regular business meetings of the congregation or Church Council in the absence of the Chair.

Secretary.

Term of one year, limited to three consecutive terms. The officeholder may be re-elected after a lapse of one year.

Duties:

Keep minutes of all regular or special business meetings of the Church.

Serve as Secretary of the Church Council, keep records of all its regular or called meetings, and perform other duties as assigned.

Treasurer.

Term of one year, limited to three consecutive terms. The officeholder may be re-elected after a lapse of one year.

Duties:

Receive and record all funds and deposit them in the proper Church accounts.

Maintain individual account record of each contributor, sending out statements as directed by the Church Council.

Prepare report of Church financial status to be presented at regular meetings of the Church Council and quarterly to the Congregation.

Disburse funds of the Church according to the authority designated to him/her by the Church Council.

Portions of the above duties may be assigned to an Administrative Assistant with approval of the Church Council and with appropriate oversight.

Trustees.

Terms of three years each, limited to one term.

There shall be three in number, and terms shall be staggered with one Trustee elected at each annual meeting. Trustees may be re-elected after a lapse of one year.

Duties:

Act as the legal agents of the Church in all business matters, under the direction of the Church Council and subject to the approval of the Congregation. Trustees must be unanimous in decisions or defer the action to the Council.

Hold legal title to all Church property and conduct all business transactions related thereto, on behalf of the Congregation.

Oversee the investment instruments of the Church including endowment and trust funds. Deposits, withdrawals, and interest shall be as directed by the Church Council in compliance with the restrictions of those funds. Principal amount of identified funds which have not been designated for a specific purpose may be disbursed only with the approval of the Council and the Congregation.

Signees on all accounts shall be determined by the Church Council.

Elders.

Terms of three years each.

The number of Elders shall be determined by the Nominating Committee in consultation with the Pastor.

Approximately one-third of the Elders shall be elected each year, limited to two consecutive terms. They may be re-elected after a lapse of one year.

During the sabbatical year, they shall be considered “in reserve” and responsible only on a temporary or emergency basis.

Following the annual election and before the next meeting of the Church Council, the Elders will meet to select a Chair.

Duties:

Assist the Pastor with the pastoral care of the Church.

Provide spiritual oversight to the members with respect to regular attendance at the Lord's Supper.

Visit members and shut-ins.

Encourage the outreach, educational, evangelistic, and stewardship responsibilities of the Church.

Oversee ordinations sponsored by the Congregation, using guidelines prepared by the Northwest Regional Christian Church.

Study and clarify any issue that may arise over doctrinal position or practice of the Congregational, Regional, or General manifestation of the Church.

Serve at the communion table and assist in other areas of worship, including baptism.

Diaconate.

Terms of one year each.

The number of Diaconate members shall be determined by the Nominating Committee in consultation with the Pastor.

Following the annual election and before the next meeting of the Church Council, the Diaconate will meet to select a Chair. During the ensuing year, other Church members may be called upon to perform diaconal duties.

Duties:

Cooperate with the Elders and the Pastor in carrying out the pastoral ministry of the Church.

Assist in the teaching and administrative programs of the Church through the functional ministries.

Assist with baptisms and in the preparation and serving of communion and homebound communion.

Section C – Elections.

A Nominating Committee shall be established to develop a slate of nominees for each elected position. The Committee shall consist of a Chair and two members of the Congregation, all appointed by the Council Chair. Membership of the Nominating Committee shall also include a representative each from the Elders, the Diaconate, and the Ministry of Worship, selected by the members of those offices.

In preparing the slate of nominees, the Nominating Committee shall invite recommendations from members of the Congregation to be submitted at least 60 days prior to the date of the annual election. The Nominating Committee shall obtain permission from the prospective nominees for their names to be on the slate.

Nominations shall be published in the Church newsletter and the Sunday bulletins at least two weeks prior to the election.

Election shall be by a majority of votes cast by members of the Church present and voting at the Annual Congregational Business Meeting.

Vacancies that occur mid-term shall be filled by the Chair of the Church Council, with Council approval.

Article IV

The Pastor

Section A – Duties.

The Pastor of the Church shall perform the duties which usually pertain to that office and shall, as spiritual administrator of the Church, be an ex-officio member of all organized groups, auxiliaries, ministries, and teams.

Section B – Selection.

A Search Committee shall be nominated by the Chair of the Church Council and approved by the Council. The Search Committee shall consist of a representative from each functional Ministry, and shall also include the Chair of the Personnel Team and one Trustee.

The Elders shall consider the recommendation of the Search Committee.

Upon approval by the Elders, the Search Committee's recommendation shall be presented to the Congregation. The selection must be accepted by at least a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at a regular or special business meeting of the Church before a call may be extended.

Section C – Term of Office.

The Pastor's term of office shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated by either the Pastor or the Congregation with a sixty-day written notice.

Section D – Terms of Employment.

A written statement setting forth the salary to be paid and other conditions of the call shall be made by the Search Committee. Upon agreement by the candidate, the contract shall be signed by the selected candidate and one Trustee.

The above procedures shall apply to all pastoral employees of the Congregation.

ARTICLE V

Meetings

Section A – Meetings.

The Church shall hold an Annual Congregational Business Meeting during the last two weeks of April or the first two weeks of May of each year.

Special meetings may be held as required. Such meetings may be called by the Chair or Vice-Chair, upon request of the Church Council, or by written petition of ten members of the Congregation.

Section B – Notice.

Written notice of any and all Church Council or Congregational meetings shall be made at least two weeks prior to said meeting.

Section C – Rules of Order

All business meetings of the Church shall be conducted as agreed upon by those meeting.

ARTICLE VI

Distribution of Assets

In the event of dissolution or final liquidation of this corporation, all its net assets shall be distributed in cooperation with the Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Seattle, Washington, a non-profit, tax-exempt religious organization.

ARTICLE VII

Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by a majority vote of Council members, or by a written proposal signed by ten members of the Congregation.

Written notice of a proposed amendment shall be provided to members of the Congregation through the Church paper and direct or electronic mail no less than two weeks prior to the date of the meeting called to consider the proposed amendment.

Proposed amendments shall be adopted upon a two-thirds vote of members present and voting.

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