

DESIGN OF THE FLORIDA DISCIPLES OF CHRIST REGIONAL CHURCH, INC.

This Design (Bylaws) constitutes the code of rules adopted by the Florida Disciples of Christ Regional Church, Incorporated, a 501(c) (3) organization, for the regulation and management of its affairs and to affirm our covenant relationship as self-governing congregations in ministry.

As part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, Inc., we stand with our sisters and brothers in affirming our faith:

Preamble to the Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

As members of the Christian Church,
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 to 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 savings acts of 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.

Section 1: MEMBERSHIP OF THE FLORIDA DISCIPLES OF CHRIST REGIONAL CHURCH

1.0 The Florida Disciples of Christ Regional Church is comprised of self-governing Disciples of Christ congregations as identified in the most current *Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada*, committed to manifesting the Christian faith through Local, Regional, General and Ecumenical Partnership.

1.1 Florida Disciples of Christ self-governing congregations in covenant relationship with the Florida Disciples of Christ Regional Church will:

- a) Claim our historic identity as Disciples of Christ and celebrate our unique expression of church
- b) Provide a Partner to serve on the Leadership Council and be responsible for the attendance and participation of their Partner
- c) After a Partner is selected, if it is determined they are unable to continue to serve, the congregation will be responsible for the selection of a new Partner to serve the remainder of said term
- d) Be responsible for the related expenses for the participation of their Partner in the Leadership Council
- e) Encourage members to be engaged in the life, witness and work of the Regional Church via Commissions, Committees, Camps, Assemblies, and all opportunities for celebration and collaboration
- f) Support fellow Disciples through the work of Resource Teams and Affinity Networks
- g) Contribute faithfully to Disciples Mission Fund (DMF) and the Special Offerings of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- h) Participate as possible in other funding requests, programs and special needs

SECTION 2: REGIONAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

2.0 The Leadership Council will be the governing body for the Florida Disciples of Christ Regional Church. It exists to strengthen relationships between self-governing congregations in covenant relationship by affirming Disciples identity and seeking to be inclusive of all Florida Disciples of Christ in the mission and ministry of the Regional Church.

- 2.1 The Leadership Council will consist of:
- a) One Partner from each self-governing congregation (and congregation in formation) in covenant relationship
 - b) Moderator
 - c) Moderator-Elect
 - d) Regional Minister
 - e) Associate Regional Minister(s)
 - f) Director of the Retreat at Silver Springs
- 2.2 Terms for the Leadership Council Members shall begin on the first day of January:
- a) Partners, two years with successive terms up to a maximum of six years.
 - b) Moderator, two years
 - c) Moderator-Elect, two years, followed by two years as Moderator
 - d) Regional Ministerial Staff and Director of the Retreat at Silver Springs, concurrent with employment.
- 2.3 The Functions of the Leadership Council are:
- a) Transact business, take action on matters and issues facing congregations and the church at large, and also provide opportunities for corporate worship, inspiration, education, fellowship, and region wide forums/gatherings
 - b) Be responsible to the Regional Church. All members of the Leadership Council have the privilege of voice and vote
 - c) Authorize the creation and/or elimination of ministries, commissions and committees to perform specific functions as determined by the Leadership Council
 - d) Receive and act upon requests and concerns
 - e) Consider financial requests, oversee expenses, review financial transactions, and approve an annual budget for the ministries of the Regional Church
 - f) Establish policies and procedures – with the exception of the policies and procedures of the Commission on Ministry which are established by the General Commission on Ministry. Any divergence from General Commission on Ministry policies and procedures will be approved by the Leadership Council
 - g) Assure accountability of all committees, commissions, task groups and partners
 - h) Approve nominations and appointments
 - i) Receive “Congregations-in-Formation” and partner with them toward “Recognized Congregation Status”

- j) Consider requests from existing non-Disciples of Christ congregations seeking to enter our affiliation process
- k) Create and/or eliminate Associate Regional Ministerial Staff, Administrative Staff, Director of Retreat at Silver Springs, and contracted staff in collaboration with the Administrative Team.
- l) Receive reports from all ministries, committees and commissions
- m) Meet at least three times per calendar year
- n) Notice of meetings shall be announced to the Leadership Council no less than two weeks prior to the meeting with a general announcement made to the Regional Church,
- o) Leadership Council meetings are open meetings
- p) While some issues will require a vote, the Leadership Council is encouraged to govern by a process of discernment and decision making arriving at “consensus” for non-binding issues,
- q) Make use of all available technologies to meet and communicate as necessary,
- r) Supervise/oversee the creation and/or elimination of Resource Teams and Affinity Networks

2.4 A quorum for all meetings will be a simple majority, which is 51%, of the participating members of the Leadership Council.

2.5 Any member of the Leadership Council, elected or appointed to office, may be removed by the Leadership Council:

- a) whenever, in the judgment of the Leadership Council, the best interests of this Region are not being served, or
- b) the member is unable to perform his/her duties

This will be accomplished by following established procedures defined by the Administrative Team.

SECTION 3: REGIONAL CHURCH PARTNERS

3.0 Partners are selected delegates from self-governing congregations (and congregations in formation) in covenant relationship with the Florida Disciples of Christ Regional Church and:

- a) Will be commissioned by their congregation to serve on the Leadership Council
- b) Must be active, participating members of their congregation
- c) May be Lay member or Clergy.
- d) “Faithful attendance” at all Leadership Council sessions is expected

- e) If a Partner is elected to serve as Moderator or Moderator Elect, they may no longer serve as a Partner from a congregation. It is expected that the Moderator and Moderator Elect will represent the interests of the Region as a whole.

3.1 The functions are:

- a) Serve as liaison between the Leadership Council and their congregation; report from Leadership Council to congregation; Report from congregation to Leadership Council.
- b) Educate their congregation about the purpose, finance, mission, etc., of Florida Disciples of Christ Regional Church.
- c) Facilitate consensus while participating in regional decision making process.

SECTION 4: ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

4.0 The Administrative Team shall consist of the:

- a) Moderator
- b) Moderator-Elect
- c) Regional Minister
- d) Chair persons of:
 - 1) Commission on Ministry
 - 2) Stewardship Commission
 - 3) Outdoor and Youth Ministries Commission
 - 4) Retreat Facilities Commission
 - 5) New & Affiliating Congregation Commission
- e) Partner on the Leadership Council who is from a congregation that is a member of the Southeast Convencion will serve on the Administrative Team.
- f) The same opportunity will be given to Florida Disciples who are members of the National Convocation and North American Pacific Asian Disciples.

4.1 Terms of Office are limited to two years with successive terms up to a maximum of six years, with the exception of the Moderator, Moderator-Elect, and Regional Minister.

4.2 Functions are:

- a) Assure the ongoing reflection of the Leadership Council as to the Vision and Mission of the Regional Church
- b) Review reports, motions, requests, concerns, and potential business of the Regional Church for completeness, costs, etc. in preparation for the Leadership Council session
- c) Determine if a situation requires immediate convening of the Leadership Council.

- d) Collaborate with the Regional Minister Search Team on the process for confirmation of a candidate prior to submission to the Leadership Council
- e) Review and revise the annual budget and other financial matters for presentation to the Leadership Council
- f) Create agenda for Leadership Council sessions
- g) Establish a Nominating Committee (chaired by the Moderator-Elect) which has the responsibility for nominating a moderator and moderator-elect. Candidates/ Nominees may come from Leadership Council or leaders (clergy or lay) active in other regional church ministries
- h) Obtain the services of a Recording Secretary.
- i) Assure the fulfillment of assignments, tasks, and projects undertaken by the Leadership Council or Administrative Team,
- j) Coordinate the calendars of the: Administrative Team, Leadership Council, ministries, congregations, commissions and committees.

4.3 The Administrative Team will meet three times per year prior to each Leadership Council session. It is expected that at least one meeting will be in person. Other meetings can be held through whatever means technology allows.

4.4 A quorum for all meetings of the Administrative Team shall be two-thirds of its members.

SECTION 5: RECORDING SECRETARY

5.0 The Recording Secretary will be compensated for time and expenses. The Recording Secretary will not be a Leadership Council Partner or a member of the Administrative Team.

5.1 Functions of the Recording Secretary are:

- a) Create and maintain attendance records, minutes and documents used by the Leadership Council and Administrative Team.
- b) Within one week after a session or meeting, provide minutes to the Moderator, Moderator-Elect and Regional Minister for their review and corrections.
- c) Reviewed minutes of the Administrative Team will be sent to the Administrative Team for final Approval and distribution to the Administrative Team.
- d) Reviewed minutes for Leadership Council meetings will be sent to the Leadership Council for approval and distribution to congregations and all Ministers of congregations in covenant relationship.

SECTION 6: OFFICERS

6.0 The officers of the corporation will be the Moderator (President), Moderator-Elect (Vice-President), and the Regional Minister (Corporate Secretary and Registered Agent¹).

6.1 In addition to being the Registered Agent, the Regional Minister, as Corporate Secretary, will have the primary responsibility for signing official documents and representing the Regional Church in legal matters.

6.2 The Moderator (President) and the Moderator Elect (Vice President) are authorized to do the same in collaboration with the Regional Minister. If there is no Regional Minister on staff, they will collaborate with each other and seek input from the Administrative Team – waiting 24 hours prior to taking action. They will inform the Administrative Team of their action(s) via email within 24 hours.

Section 7: Moderator

7.0 Responsibilities of the Moderator are:

- a) Serve as Corporate President, and a legal signator as outlined in section VI above.
- b) Serve as Chairperson, with vote of the Leadership Council and Administrative Team.
- c) Consult with Regional Staff, District Moderators and Regional Chairpersons,
- d) Coordinate and implement programs within the Regional Church,
- e) Serve as ex officio member on all Ministries, Commissions and Committees,
- f) Collaborate with the Nominating Committee to Appoint Chair persons of all Regional Ministries, Commissions and Committees.

7.1 In the event the Moderator is unable to complete the term of office, the Moderator-Elect will assume the office of the Moderator for the remainder of said term.

SECTION 8: MODERATOR-ELECT

8.0 Duties of the Moderator-Elect are:

- (a) Perform duties of the Moderator as required at the will of and in the absence of the Moderator,
- (b) Serve as Corporate Vice President, with signatory duties
- (c) Serve as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee,
- (d) Serve as ex-officio member of all Ministries and Committees.

8.1 If the Moderator-Elect is unable to complete his/her term, the Nominating Committee will recommend a candidate to serve as Interim Moderator-Elect. Upon approval by the Leadership Council, that candidate will serve the remainder of said term.

SECTION 9: REGIONAL MINISTER

9.0 Regional Ministry is about being in relationship with ministers and congregations and being present with them in times of joy and times of sorrow. The Regional Minister is called to serve as leader in the creation of a collaborative Regional Ministry. In Christ, “the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” Ephesians 4:16 (NIV).

9.1 A Regional Minister is called:

- a) To make visible the unity of the church, and serve as the primary ecumenical representative,
- b) Proclaim and teach the Christian faith to which scripture testifies,
- c) Offer pastoral care and oversight to the Regional church with full access to boards, committees, commissions, ministries and ethnic constituencies,
- d) Represent and lead the Regional Church in its collaborative mission and ministry,
- e) Administer the Regional work of ministry, office and staff
- f) Be accountable to the Christian Church, (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada,
- g) Give oversight to the continual discernment of God’s vision,
- h) Guide congregations seeking new ministerial leadership and with pastors seeking to relocate in the Disciples Search and Call process,
- i) Hold fiduciary responsibility for the Regional Church’s finances,
- j) Sign official documents and serve as Resident Agent for the Florida Disciples of Christ Regional Church.

9.2 Regional Minister’s Qualifications and Accountability are:

- a) The Regional Minister shall have at least a Master of Divinity degree and be an ordained minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),
- b) The Regional Minister shall have served at least five years in Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregational ministry,
- c) Upon the nomination of the Regional Search and Call Committee, the Regional Minister shall be elected and called to the ministry by eighty percent (80%) of the Leadership

Council members present and voting,

- d) The Regional Minister is accountable to the Leadership Council and Administrative Team,
- e) The Regional Minister may be removed from office, only for cause, by eighty percent (80%) of the Leadership Council members present and voting.

9.3 In the event the Regional Minister terminates employment, or is unable to perform his/her duties for a prolonged period of time:

- a) The Moderator, in cooperation with the Administrative Team, will appoint a Search and Call Committee,
- b) The Search and Call Committee will follow the established procedures of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in calling an Interim Regional Minister to perform the duties of Regional Minister until such time as the Regional Minister is again able to perform his/her duties or until a permanent replacement can be obtained,
- c) Upon the nomination of the Regional Search and Call Committee, the Regional Minister shall be elected and called to the ministry by eighty percent (80%) of the Leadership Council members present and voting.

SECTION 10: REGIONAL MINISTERIAL AND OFFICE STAFF

10.0 Duties, responsibilities, expectations and performance evaluations will be established by a standing Personnel Committee in their Policies and Procedure Manual with oversight by the Administrative Team.

10.1 Each Regional staff member, including clergy, will participate in an annual performance evaluation, which will become part of their personnel record, by the end of the third quarter to: provide the opportunity to assess performance and progress against the goals previously mutually agreed upon for the evaluation period, identify areas of concern and plans of action, establish goals for the coming evaluation period, and develop strategies for their accomplishments. Periodic midterm evaluations are encouraged.

10.2 A Pastoral Relations Committee shall be established according to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) *Guidelines for the Pastoral Relations Committee* for each clergy staff member,

10.3 Call letters for ministerial staff will reflect duties and responsibilities as defined in the Policies and Procedure Manual.

SECTION 11: REGIONAL GATHERINGS

11.0 Florida Disciples (all members of congregations, congregations in formation and ministers) shall gather at such times as determined by the Regional Church Leadership Council at minimum biennially.

11.1 The purpose of Regional Church gatherings is to provide worship, education, fellowship, and forums in which all congregations in covenant relationship may tend to any matters relating to the life and work of the Florida Disciples Regional Church, including celebration of the “recognition” of congregations in formation.

11.2 Place, time/date and host will be announced at least nine months prior to next gathering.

SECTION 12: DISTRICTS/CLUSTERS

12.0 The purpose of Districts/Clusters is to provide worship, education, fellowship, and forums with congregations in covenant relationship.

12.1 The number and boundaries of the Districts/Clusters shall be established, dissolved or redrawn as recommended by the Leadership Council.

SECTION 13: INFORMAL ACTION

13.0 Waiver of Notice: Whenever any formal notice (i.e., notice of meeting timeline) is required to be given (under the provisions of the law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these design/bylaws), a waiver of such notice in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to receive the formal notice, whether before or after the time stated in such waiver, will be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. Such waiver must, in the case of a special meeting of members, specify the general nature of the business to be transacted.

13.1 Action by Consent: Any action required by law or under the Articles of Incorporation or by these design/bylaws, or any action which otherwise may be taken by the Leadership Council may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, is signed by all the persons entitled to vote with respect to the subject matter of such consent, or all Leadership Council members, and filed with the Corporate Secretary of the Corporation.

SECTION 14: OPERATIONS

14.0 Fiscal Year: The Region shall use the calendar year, January 1 through December 31, as

its operational year.

14.1 Audits: The Financial Records of the Region shall be audited annually. This is handled by the Treasury Services of the Offices of the General Minister and President. A copy of the audit will be available to Stewardship and Finance and the Administrative Team. The Administrative Team will make the results of the audit available to the Leadership Council, individuals and congregations upon written request.

14.2 Loans to Management: The Region will make no loans to any Staff, Leadership Council Members, or Officers.

14.3 Execution of Documents: Contracts, promissory notes, leases, or other instruments executed in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation shall be signed by two of the following three officers: Moderator (Corporate President), Moderator Elect (Corporate Vice President), Regional Minister (Corporate Secretary).

SECTION 15: AMENDMENTS

15.0 The Leadership Council may adopt Articles of Amendment (amending the Articles of Incorporation). Articles of Amendment must be adopted in accordance with Florida Law. The design/bylaws may be amended at any time by a majority vote of the Leadership Council.

SECTION 16: PUBLIC STATEMENTS

16.0 Authority to make Statements: No person, except for the Regional Minister or Moderator shall be authorized to make any public statements, whether written or oral, purporting to represent the official policy, position, or opinion of the Florida Disciples of Christ, Inc. without first having obtained the approval of the Administrative Team or Leadership Council.

16.1 Limitation on Statements: Any person who is authorized to make any public statement to the media, whether written or oral, purporting to represent the official policy, position, recommendation or opinion of the Florida Disciples of Christ, Inc., shall first make it clear that he or she is representing the Region. Thereafter, throughout the entire presentation, he or she shall confine his/her presentation only to those matters which have been properly approved by the Administrative Team or Leadership Council. He or she shall not at the same time present any statement purporting to represent any other firm, group, or organization or purporting to represent his or her own personal views.

SECTION 17: INDEMNIFICATION:

17.0 Any person (and the heirs, executors and administrators of such person) made or threatened to be made a party to any action, suit or proceeding because he/she is or was a Leadership Council Member or Officer of the Florida Disciples of Christ, Inc., shall be indemnified:

- a) by the Region against any and all liability and the reasonable expenses, including attorney's fees and disbursements, incurred by him/her (or by his/her heirs, executors or administrators) in connection with the defense or settlement of such action, suit or proceeding, or in connection with any appearance therein, except in relation to matters as to which it shall be adjudged in such action, suit or proceeding that such Leadership Council Member or Officer is liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his/her duties.
- b) Such right of indemnification shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which such Leadership Council Member or Officer (or such heirs, executors of administrators) may be entitled apart from this Article.

17.1 These Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Florida, Inc. were approved:

- a) by the 83rd Regional Assembly of the Florida Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), Inc. meeting in Clearwater, October 3-5, 1974,
- b) revised by the 93rd Regional Assembly meeting in Orlando, October 27-30, 1994,
- c) revised by the 94th Regional Assembly meeting in Tampa, October 24-27, 1996,
- d) revised by the 100th Regional Assembly meeting in Orlando, September 18-21, 2008
- e) revised by the 101th Florida Disciples of Christ Regional-Assembly meeting in ~~?? October 20-22, 2016.~~?