

**CONSTITUTION
OF
MERGER CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

ARTICLE I – Name and Affiliation

- A. The name of this church shall be the Merger Christian Church.
- B. Although remaining autonomous and independent, this Church shall be affiliated with the denomination known as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and shall be committed to the historical principles of this body.

ARTICLE II – Purpose

The purpose of this church is to proclaim, in word and deed, the gospel as revealed through Jesus Christ and engage in the common task of building the kingdom of God, as led and empowered by the Holy Spirit; to encourage in all persons a faith and commitment to Jesus Christ; to create an environment in which all people can discover their unique God-given gifts, cultivate them and use them in a meaningful ministry.

ARTICLE III – Membership

- A. The membership of this Church shall consist of those who are now identified as members and those who shall unite with it by confession of faith or by transfer of membership. Baptism shall be administered by immersion. However, members who come from other church traditions shall be received by transfer of membership without the requirement of immersion.
- B. Membership in this Church includes such responsibilities as regularly attending worship services, participating in the fellowship of the Church, and contributing to the support of the Church. Membership gives voting privileges at all congregational meetings, and entitles one to elective or appointive office.
- C. Members who fail to show continuing interest in the Church through attendance, giving, activity, and spiritual concern for a period of one year may be placed on a non-participating member list. Non-participating members are not entitled to vote. Homebound members and those who are limited in their ability to participate because of age, illness, or disability are exempt from the non-participating list.

D. Associate membership shall be available to temporary residents, such as military personnel and students, who do not wish to transfer from their home churches. Such persons shall cease to be Associate Members when they are no longer residents in this Church's geographical area.

Associate Members shall have all the privileges and responsibilities of regular participating members, except the right to vote or hold office.

ARTICLE IV – Governing Authority

All authority in the government of this Church rests in the membership. Certain functions may be, and herein are, delegated to official representatives of the membership.

ARTICLE V – The Official Board

- A. The Official Board of this Church shall be comprised of a Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary, Church Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Church Clerk, Church Trustees, three Elders, (including the Chairperson of the Elders), and the Chairperson of the Diaconate. The minister shall be an ex officio member of the Board without a vote.
- B. There shall be at least half of the membership of the Official Board present to constitute a quorum.

- C. There shall be a maximum of nine (9) Elders.
- D. There shall be a maximum of sixteen (16) members of the Diaconate.
- E. There shall be three (3) Trustees elected for a three year term. Trustees may succeed themselves. Each Trustee must be bonded.

ARTICLE VI – Meetings

- A. The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be held at least thirty (30) days before the beginning of the calendar year. Two weeks' written notice of such meeting shall be given to the membership of the Church.
- B. Special meetings of the Church may be called by the Chairperson of the Congregation. A special meeting shall also be called by the Chairperson **upon** the written request of ten (10) or more active church members.

A notice of the special meeting shall be given to the Congregation in a regular worship service at least two Sundays before the meeting. Active members who are absent on that Sunday shall be notified by mail. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the notice. Matters taken up in the special meeting shall be limited to the stated purpose.
- C. Thirty percent (30%) **of the** participating members present for a regular or duly called special meeting of the Church shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VII – Election and Voting

- A. The officers of the Church, as stated in Article V, Section A, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Church. Any other Congregational officers needed shall also be elected at the Annual Meeting.
- B. For the first year, one-third of the Elders and Diaconate shall be elected for a term of one year, one-third shall be elected for a term of two years, and one-third shall be elected for a term of three years. In each succeeding year, one-third of the Elders and Diaconate shall be elected for a term of three years.
- C. The Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary, Church Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Church Clerk, and other Congregational officers as needed, shall be elected for a term of one year, and may succeed themselves for a maximum of three (3) years.
- D. As stated in Article V, Section E, there shall be three (3) Trustees elected for a three (3) year term. Trustees may succeed themselves.
- E. At least sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Meeting, the Chairperson of the Official Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee composed of one Elder, one man and one woman from the Diaconate, and one active Church Member not a member of the Official Board. The Minister shall be an ex officio member of the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee shall recommend to the Board the names of persons of good repute and sufficient ability to fill the offices becoming vacant. Nominees for Elders shall be chosen in consultation with the the Board of Elders. Upon approval by the Board, the names of one person for each vacancy shall be presented for election by the Church Membership at the Annual Meeting. The election shall be by voice vote, unless the Church Membership shall decide on a secret ballot.

- F. The Official Board shall have the authority to fill vacancies in church offices occurring between annual elections. Persons so appointed shall serve the unexpired term and be eligible for election to a full term.

ARTICLE VIII – The Minister

There shall be a Minister of this Church.

The Minister shall be totally committed to Jesus Christ as Lord, and shall have a zeal for world evangelism beginning with the local community and concerned with ministry to the whole person in the light of the Holy Scriptures.

The Minister shall be in sympathy with the historical ideals and purposes of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in fellowship with that denomination, and shall be a supporter of its reporting agencies. He/she shall have official standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and shall meet the guidelines for license/ordination of the aforementioned church.

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[The following section in italics is to be transferred to the Bylaws.]

B. The Call of a Minister

- 1. The Official Board shall appoint a Pulpit Committee composed of two Elders, a man and a woman from the Diaconate, two active adult members who are not members of the Official Board, and one active youth member.*
- 2. The Pulpit Committee shall work closely with the Regional Office in securing and screening ministerial candidates.*
- 3. The Committee shall report frequently to the Congregation concerning progress.*
- 4. Salary, benefits, and other terms of the Calling Agreement to be recommended to the Church shall be negotiated by the Pulpit Committee within the approved Budget of the Church.*
- 5. The Committee shall present only one name at a time to the Official Board. The Board with a three-fourths favorable vote shall present the name of the candidate to the Congregation at a called or regular meeting of the Congregation.*
- 6. The Congregation shall vote on the candidate by secret ballot. A three-fourths affirmative vote of members present shall constitute a Call to the Minister under consideration.*

C. Tenure of the Minister

- 1. The Minister shall be called to serve for an indefinite term.*

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[The following section in italics is to be transferred to the Bylaws.]

D. Termination

- 1. The Minister shall give ninety (90) days notice to the Church of his/her intention to resign from the position. The notice must be in writing and mailed or delivered to the Chairperson of the Official Board.*
- 2. The Church shall give ninety (90) days notice to the Minister to terminate his/her position. Termination of employment must first be considered by the Official Board before being presented at a Congregational meeting, either regular or called. It shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of members present for a Minister's service to be terminated. A written notice of the action shall be presented to the Minister.*

ARTICLE IX – Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of Members present at any Congregational meeting, regular or called, provided written copies of the proposed amendment(s) has/have been made available to the Church Membership at least two weeks prior to the vote.