

**BY-LAWS
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, NORFOLK, NE 68701**

January 2023

The By-Laws of First Christian Church (FCC) of Norfolk, Nebraska, are herewith totally amended and revised, thereby superseding the present By-Laws and all amendments thereto. The amended and revised By-Laws of FCC of Norfolk, Nebraska, are as follows:

ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP

- A. The membership of this Church shall consist of the following:
 - 1. Those who are now identified as members of the Congregation.
 - 2. Those who express a desire and are received into membership at the time that they affirm faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and are baptized by immersion.
 - 3. Those who are previously immersed believers who express a desire and are received into membership by affirming their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
- B. Privileges of Membership – We understand that a Christian is a Christian wherever his/her membership is. Still, membership in this local Congregation is required for certain privileges.
 - 1. Holding any office, teaching position, or other leadership role in this Church shall be the privilege of those members who are 19 years of age and older, are mentally competent and have demonstrated an active interest and participation in the church during the past year, except as specified under Dual Membership, ARTICLE I, Section D.
 - 2. Voting at any meeting of the Congregation shall be the privilege of those members who are 16 years of age and older, are mentally competent and have demonstrated an active interest and participation in the church during the past year, except as qualified in ARTICLE I. Section D.
- C. Removal from Membership – The Church Membership records will be maintained by the FCC Church Office. The Church office shall remove the names of the following from the membership roll.
 - 1. Those who are deceased.
 - 2. Those who have notified FCC they have joined another church.
 - 3. Those who have notified FCC they have chosen not to continue their membership.
 - 4. Those who have not been involved in FCC's ministry for a period of one year may be removed from the membership role.
- D. Dual Membership
 - i. Requirement – A dual membership may be requested by an adult who resides in the local area for a period of time and holds a membership with another church outside of the region, is an immersed believer in Jesus Christ, and wants to be an active participant in First Christian Church.
 - ii. Status – A dual member shares all the benefits of regular church membership except that a dual member shall hold no elective or appointed church office and not be able to vote in Congregational Meetings.
 - iii. Termination – A dual member will be recorded as such in the church records until the dual member:
 - a. Places membership with First Christian Church, Norfolk, Nebraska.

- b. Requests to withdraw their dual membership.
- c. Is deceased.

ARTICLE II. OFFICERS

- A. For legal purposes, the Elders are also called the Board of Directors. There shall be a minimum of two and maximum of twelve Elders. Elders serve three-year terms.
- B. The Finance Ministry Team Leader shall serve as the Church Treasurer.
- C. The Trustees shall be recommended by the Finance Ministry Team and appointed by the Elders. There shall be at least three Trustees appointed to serve for three-year terms or until such time as a successor is appointed and assumes office. Trustees shall have been active members of the Congregation at least one year immediately prior to the appointment.
- D. Duties of Officers
 - 1. Elders – According to the New Testament Scriptures, Elders shall oversee the local Church. They shall promote the growth and welfare of the church; give spiritual oversight to the entire church; give thoughtful consideration to policies of the church that will enable it to fulfill its complete mission; and encourage by example and by word the missionary, evangelistic, discipleship and stewardship responsibilities of the Church. They are responsible for all teaching given by representatives of the Church, such as preachers, Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, etc.
 - 2. Church Treasurer – Shall oversee the management and reporting of all church funds and transactions in accordance with the duly adopted budget or upon authority designated by the Elders. The Treasurer may be bonded, the amount to be determined by the Trustees.
 - 3. Trustees – Shall act as the legal agents of the Church in all business matters; hold legal title to all church property (as legal agents of the Church); have supervision over all endowment and trust funds; perform such duties as are required by the laws of the State of Nebraska; and may serve as members of the Finance Ministry Team. The Trustees shall operate under the direction of the Elders.
- E. Election of Elders
 - 1. Approximately ninety (90) days prior to the end of the calendar year, the currently serving Elders, will nominate, discuss and approve potential new Elder candidates. A new Elder will have been an active member of this Congregation for at least one year immediately prior to serving as an Elder.
 - 2. Approximately sixty (60) days prior to the end of the calendar year, currently serving Elders, and/or staff appointed by the Elders, will contact the potential new Elder candidates to discuss the Elder position itself, answer questions and determine their interest and/or consent to serve.
 - 3. Approximately forty-five (45) days prior to the end of the calendar year, the Elder candidates that have agreed to serve will be announced to the Congregation. The Congregation will be encouraged to contact the currently serving Elders, and/or the staff with comments or questions regarding the Elder candidates. All comments or questions are to be communicated by the Congregation to the currently serving Elders or ministers by December 1.
 - 4. The currently serving Elders will discuss comments and/or questions communicated by the Congregation regarding Elder candidates at a December meeting. The Elders will make the

final determination regarding the potential new Elder candidates and approve or not approve those candidates. Elder candidates will be promptly notified of these decisions.

5. New Elders will be announced to the Congregation as soon as practical, and all new Elders will begin their term on January 1 of the year immediately following their approval.
6. The currently serving Elders may appoint new Elders outside of the normal calendar year when they deem necessary. The new Elders' term will expire three years from the January 1 closest to their appointment.
7. The Elders shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary at the first regular meeting following the start of the church year. The Elder Chairman shall serve as Chairman of the Congregation.
8. An Elder may be removed from office by the agreement of the majority of currently serving Elders.

ARTICLE III. THE MINISTERS

A. Duties of the Lead Minister

1. The Lead Minister shall be responsible to the Elders for the performance of the duties of his office, the administration of the church, and the character of his doctrinal teaching.
2. The Lead Minister shall be responsible for the supervision of all other ministers of the Church.
3. Other duties and relationships shall be specified in the written employment agreement between the Lead Minister and the Church and shall be included in the minutes of the Elders.

B. Duties and relationships of other ministerial personnel shall be specified in the written employment agreement between said ministerial personnel and the Church and shall be included in the minutes of the Elders.

C. Selection – Ministers, excluding ministerial interns, shall be chosen by the Church as hereinafter provided:

1. The Elders shall serve as Lead Minister Search Committee and be responsible for unanimously recommending a Lead Minister candidate to the Congregation.
2. The Congregation shall consider the Elders' recommendation for Lead Minister. This recommendation must be accepted by an affirmative vote of at least 75% of the votes cast in a congregational meeting before a call may be extended. An abstention will not be tabulated as a vote cast.
3. It shall be the policy of the church for the Congregation to consider only one candidate at a time for Lead Minister.
4. The Lead Minister shall screen applicants for other ministerial positions and shall recommend candidates for such positions to the Elders.
5. The Elders shall consider and affirm recommended candidates for employment.
6. A written employment agreement covering terms of employment shall be included in the minutes of the Elders, a copy of which shall be made available to the minister.
7. A Minister is required to place membership with FCC within 60 days of their start date of their employment.

ARTICLE IV. OTHER EMPLOYEES

- A. The hiring of all other employees shall be the responsibility of the Lead Minister.
- B. A written employment agreement covering terms of employment shall be included in the minutes of the Elders, a copy of which shall be made available to the employee.

ARTICLE V. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

- A. Congregational meetings may be called by the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Elders or by written petition of 25% or more members of the Congregation eligible to vote, such members being defined in ARTICLE I, Section B.
- B. Notice of all meetings of the Congregation shall be announced at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting.
- C. Congregational Votes
 - 1. The Congregation shall vote on By-Laws Revisions, the Calling of a Lead Minister, and other items as the Elders see necessary or beneficial.
 - 2. Notice of all Congregational Votes shall be announced at least ten (10) days in advance of the vote.
 - 3. Members of the Congregation eligible to vote are defined in ARTICLE I, Section B. The eligibility of voters may be validated.
 - 4. The Church office, upon request, shall furnish an absentee ballot to eligible voters. Such ballots shall be available at least one week prior to the meeting and must be returned in time to be counted at said meeting.
 - 5. Ballots may be provided and/or accepted electronically.
 - 6. Ballot items must be accepted by an affirmative vote of at least 75% of the votes cast. An abstention will not be tabulated as a vote cast. The Elders reserve the right to determine different percentages on specific items. The Elders reserve the right to alter recommendations based on the results of a vote.
- D. All meetings of the Congregation shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, except as otherwise prescribed in these By-Laws.

ARTICLE VI. MINISTRY SYSTEM

- A. First Christian Church functions through a Ministry System. The activities and procedures of each ministry area are the responsibility of the respective ministry leaders and are to be consistent with overall Church doctrine and purpose. It is a purpose of the Ministry system to encourage every member of the body to be involved and to grow in Christ through service.
- B. The number and type of Ministries is determined by the Church's mission, the needs of the Congregation, and the availability of servant leaders.
- C. The Elders, Lead Minister, and others whom the Elders may choose to include, compose the Management Ministry Team. The Management Ministry Team appoints members to serve as Ministry Team Leaders. Ministry Team Leaders are responsible for recruiting members for their Ministry Team.
- D. While each Ministry Team has the obligation to function as necessary to fulfill its mission, the Management Ministry Team has final authority, provides guidance and advises in all Ministry areas. While the counsel of the Elders and/or Ministers may be sought, their approval for each decision is neither necessary nor expected.

ARTICLE VII. CHURCH YEAR – Shall begin on January 1.

ARTICLE VIII. FINANCES

- A. Fund Raising – The Church shall not engage in commercial enterprise. All fund raising shall be approved by the Elders.
- B. Budget – The Finance Team shall oversee the preparation of the Annual Budget. The Annual Budget shall be approved by the Elders and the Lead Minister.
- C. Financial Review - A review of the financial records shall be conducted every three years or more often at the discretion of the Elders.

ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS

- A. These By-Laws may be amended according to ARTICLE V, Section C. Proposed amendments of the By-Laws must be submitted to the membership at least ten (10) days prior to the vote.
- B. A By-Laws Review Committee will be appointed by the Chairman of the Elders to review the By-Laws and present recommended changes to the Elders and Congregation every three years or as the need arises. Appointment of the committee will be made at an Elders' Meeting.

ARTICLE X. ENACTMENT – These By-Laws become effective immediately upon adoption of a 75% affirmative vote of eligible members voting at any congregational meeting, provided said By-Laws have first been approved by the Elders. An abstention will not be tabulated as a vote cast. Said eligible members of the Church being defined in ARTICLE I. Section B.

APPROVED _____ by Congregational vote.