



Delaware
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Constitution and By-Laws
Delaware Christian Church
Delaware, OH 43015

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Article I – Name

This congregation and all its ministries is organized as Delaware Christian Church, incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio. This church is totally autonomous and is not and never shall be governed by any other religious or non-religious organization.

Section 1 – Purpose

Vision - Delaware Christian Church and its ministries exist to be an exuberant faith community that strives to experience God, to grow in faith and to impact Delaware and the world for Jesus.

Mission - Our existence is based on reaching those who are far from God by showing them God's love.

The purpose of this church is to:

- Preach the full gospel
- Plead for Christian unity as revealed in the Scriptures
- Promote spiritual life and growth within the church
- Practice Christian care and discipline over its members
- Provide sympathy and compassion to the sorrowing, extend the Kingdom of God at home and abroad, and cultivate Christian fellowship with those of like faith who accept the Bible as final authority in all matters of faith and practice

Article II – Membership

The requirements for membership in this congregation shall be the same as Christ's requirements for conversion as stated in the Bible.

These requirements are:

1. Confession of Faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God.
2. Repentance of one's disobedience toward God.
3. Baptism by immersion, into Christ.
4. Continued faithfulness to Jesus.

Persons having met these requirements for church membership in another congregation may transfer their membership to this congregation upon their statement and expression of their desire to do so.

Section 1 – Responsibilities

Each member shall live by the Holy Spirit, commit to Christlikeness and willingly share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Each member shall serve in areas for which they are gifted and regularly set aside financial gifts and offerings to support the work of this congregation.

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Section 2 - Active Member

Any person who has met the above requirements and accepted the responsibilities of admission shall be placed on the membership roll as an active member.

Active members are indicated as such through “active status” in the church database.

Section 3 - Inactive Member

If a member of this congregation has not attended weekend worship services for a period of three months, and if such absence is not for illness or temporary absence from the community, that member shall become an inactive member and shall not be eligible to participate in any church decision making at the time of their inactive status.

A person seeking the restoration to active membership shall make a statement to the church staff or Elder of their desire to be restored to membership. The inactive member will be restored to active membership status after sixty days of consistent participation in worship services.

Consistent is defined as participation in worship at least two Sundays a month within those sixty days and at least one hundred twenty days before the annual meeting.

Section 4 – Discipline

In cases where a member becomes divisive and unwilling to place himself or herself under the authority of the Word of God, the elders or the staff of the church shall discipline that member. In all cases, the model found in the New Testament shall be followed. (Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 2 Corinthians 2:5-8, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, James 5:19-20)

If the elders or church staff deems the person unresponsive they shall remove the person’s name from the membership roll.

A person may be restored to membership only by action of the church elders and upon recommitment to the vision and mission of Delaware Christian Church.

Article III – Doctrine and Practice

Like the New Testament church, we have no creed but Christ. We accept His word stated in the Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice. We accept the Bible as the inerrant Word of God.

Our membership shall follow the pattern of Acts 2:42 including the apostles teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer.

Article IV – Leadership

Section 1 – Elder Governance

The elders, as part of the Leadership Team, shall serve as the Official Board of Delaware Christian Church. Therefore there shall be no fewer than 3 elders. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the official board but shall not have the power to vote in that body. Executive Pastors may also be considered elders if the elders so appoint them and shall serve as ex-officio members of the official board but shall not have the power to vote in that body.

The official board shall appoint from amongst themselves a chairman and a vice chairman to govern the board. The official board shall appoint a secretary from amongst themselves or church staff. The church board shall also appoint a treasurer and trustees from among capable members of the congregation.

All final congregational authority shall be vested in the elders.

Leadership team is composed of elders and ordained ministers.

Section 2 – Qualifications

All of those on the eldership must be members of Delaware Christian Church. The qualifications for elders shall be those revealed in the New Testament. (1 Timothy 3; Acts 6; Titus 1)

Section 3 – Duties

Senior Pastor and Leadership Team Roles:

Delaware Christian Church in its day-to-day operation is lead by the staff under the servant leadership of the Senior Pastor.

In relation to the Senior Pastor the Leadership Team exists to assist the Senior Pastor in fulfilling the mission and vision of the church. As such, the Leadership Team exists to serve five specific functions:

1. To serve as the primary care group for the Senior Pastor.
2. To provide a sounding board for the Senior Pastor as he senses the next steps for the church.
3. To hold the Senior Pastor accountable for the performance of the church.
4. To serve as fiduciary responsibility to the church by determining salary increases for the Senior Pastor, approving the annual budget, and holding the Senior Pastor accountable for the financial stewardship of the church.
5. To selection of the Senior Pastor.

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Specific Roles of the Elders:

- Elders are men appointed as overseers of Delaware Christian Church and must give account to God. (Heb.13:17)
- Elders shall serve as the official board of Delaware Christian Church as outlined in Article IV section 1
- The elders serve five primary purposes but not limited to:
 - 1) *Prayer* - They are to be devoted to prayer. (Acts 6:1-7)
 - 2) *Pastoral Care* – They are to oversee the church’s spiritual and physical wellbeing. (Acts 20:28; 1Peter 5:2)
 - 3) *Protection*- They are to protect the church from false teaching and false doctrine. (Acts 20:28-31)
 - 4) *Policy* – They are to develop church policy. (Acts 15:1-35)
 - 5) *Preaching* – They are to provide for the teaching and preaching of the word of God. (1Timothy 5:17)

The elders shall have general oversight of the spiritual interest of the church, adhering to the whole Constitution and By-Laws and shepherding the congregation in all matters. The elders shall promote the growth and welfare of the church, shall exercise spiritual oversight of the members, with respect to regular attendance at the Lord's table, visitation of the sick and concern for the morally delinquent and spiritually indifferent, give thoughtful consideration to policies of the Church that will enable it to fulfill its complete mission, encourage by word and example the missionary, evangelistic, educational, and stewardship responsibilities of the Church, and perform such other duties as may be appropriate.

Trustees: The trustees shall represent Delaware Christian Church in all matters of church property, sign all legal documents and papers as prescribed by the laws of the State of Ohio and perform all other duties as may be required by the State. Trustees are to act under the authority and approval of the elders.

Section 4 – Vacancies

A. Vacancies in any appointed positions of the church shall be filled by appointment by the elders. If an appointment is deemed necessary the appointee shall complete the unexpired term of the office.

B. The officers of the congregation are expected to perform the duties associated with their respective offices, attend and participate in the regular services of the Church, and cooperate in the overall program of the church. Failure to fulfill the Scriptural requirements of the office or to carry out the functions of the office shall be sufficient reason for the elders to declare a particular office vacant and, if necessary, to appoint a new person to complete the unexpired term of the office.

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C. If circumstances occur that leave only two elders in the church, then those elders' terms shall terminate immediately.

D. If circumstances occur that leave no elders in the church, new elders will be appointed. A nominating team from the congregation at large shall be selected by the pastoral staff. The nominating team shall operate within the provisions of the By-laws in accordance with Article IV section 2.

Section 5 – Removal from Leadership Team

Any elder of this congregation may be removed from office for the following reasons:

1. Loss of scriptural qualifications.
2. Failure to perform duties of the office.
3. Failure to attend regularly scheduled leadership team meetings.

The elders shall be responsible for administering this provision in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament. Removal from office shall be by a 2/3 majority vote of all the elders only after said officer has been given a written statement of the cause for removal and at least one (1) hearing before the body of elders.

Section 6 – Selection of Leadership Team Members

Selection for new Leadership Team members will be made by the current Leadership Team with the assistance of the Senior Pastor after a deliberate process of prayer, council, completion of the leadership development program and evaluation of potential candidates. After a person has been selected, the Leadership Team will interview, examine their Biblical qualification and in unison approve the candidate. The candidate names will be submitted to the congregation for support and concerns.

Individuals being considered for eldership will be presented to the congregation. The congregation will have two weeks from presentation to provide concerns or support for any candidate to the current leadership team. After all considerations the congregation will be informed of the names selected for eldership by the current leadership team.

Leadership Team members, other than the Senior Pastor, will serve on a continual basis and will be given an opportunity to excuse themselves from leadership or be given a year of sabbatical upon request to the leadership team.

Article V – Leadership Team and Staff

The leadership team and staff shall meet once every quarter for the transaction of business pertaining to the welfare of the congregation. This meeting shall serve as reporting only meeting.

Article VI – Selection of a Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor of the congregation shall be recruited and hired by the Leadership Team, unanimously. The new Senior Pastor shall minister for the period of time specified in the contract of employment.

The contract of employment shall be in writing and shall be signed by the prospective Senior Pastor and by the elders.

The qualifications of the Senior Pastor shall be set by the Leadership Team, but in no case shall they be less than those of admission to membership in the congregation.

Under no circumstances will a Senior Pastor be hired who is not familiar with the Independent Christian Church and Restoration Movement.

Section 1 - Duties of Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall serve on the Leadership Team.

In addition to the Senior Pastor's duties as a Leadership Team member, the Senior Pastor will serve as the primary teacher in weekend services, visionary leader for the congregation, and manager of church staff.

Section 2 - Termination

The position of Senior Pastor may be terminated voluntarily by giving written notice to the elders or involuntarily by a unanimous decision of the elders following appropriate corrective action.

Termination shall take effect as soon as the notice or vote is performed, unless the period of time is altered by mutual agreement of the Senior Pastor and the elders.

Section 3 - Selection and Duties of Church Staff

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The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for providing regular oversight and direction for the church staff. Under the direction of the Senior Pastor, the Church Administrator, Delaware Christian Academy Director and Executive Pastor shall be empowered for the selection of staff positions within the realm of their oversight.

Duties and qualifications of staff are documented in the applicable job description. The qualifications of church staff is described in the staff handbook and shall be no less than those of admission to membership in the congregation.

Specific policies and procedures related to church staff are contained in the Staff Handbook.

Article VII – Congregational Meetings

Section 1 – Annual Business Meeting

An annual business meeting or a sermon series focusing on the business affairs of the church shall be held each year at a date and time designated by the Senior Pastor and Leadership Team.

The final expense budget total, giving goal and the vision for the upcoming year shall be made available upon request to the individuals in the congregation in addition to an update on church business matters

Section 2 – Special Meetings

A special congregational meeting may be called by the Leadership Team. All special meetings, not considered Leadership selection, are subject to at least two weeks prior notice to the congregation. Such notice shall include the purpose for which the meeting is called.

Section 3 – Membership Responsibilities

- Actively affirm and support Delaware Christian Church leadership team
- Commit to the vision and mission set forth for Delaware Christian Church
- Uphold and live for Delaware Christian Church core values
- Attend services regularly and financially support the church

Section 4

No member of Delaware Christian Church shall be personally liable, solely because of such membership, for the debts of the church.

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Article VIII – Finances

All Funds for the operation of Delaware Christian Church shall be used for charitable causes.

All Funds of Delaware Christian Academy shall be secured by parent's payment as coordinated with the Delaware Christian Academy Director and the payment policies of DCA.

Youth groups, Ministry groups, Mission teams and similar auxiliary organizations may receive offerings and participate in fund raisers to provide for the costs of their own activities.

Unless otherwise designated all funds listed above and special gifts shall be placed in the general fund.

Article IX – Amendments

With exception of Articles II and III, The By-Laws shall be amended after the unanimous vote of the Leadership Team and will become effective upon announcement to the membership.

The By-laws shall be amended in the following manner:

- The leadership team shall notify the membership to any proposed amendments
- The membership will have two weeks from the notice to share any support or concern with the leadership team
- Any amendments to the By-laws shall be by unanimous vote of the leadership team
- The amendment shall be effective upon announcement to membership.

Please refer to Delaware Christian Church policies and procedure manual for all items not specifically addressed within these By-laws.

(Revised Oct. 1980)
(Revised Oct. 1985)
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