

CONSTITUTION OF THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
ALTUS. OKLAHOMA

We, the members of the First Christian Church of Altus, Oklahoma, a congregationally governed body, in order to promote the work of the Church in the spirit of Christ and thus advance His Kingdom, do hereby adopt this Constitution.

ARTICLE I — Name and Purpose:

SECTION A — Name:

The name of this organization shall be the FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, an independent congregation, of Altus, Oklahoma, located at 2501 N. Park Lane, Altus, OK 73521.

SECTION B — Purpose:

The general purpose of the church's business shall be the fulfillment of the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ as in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16. It shall be the duty of this church, forever to stand for the Divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

ARTICLE II — Membership:

The membership of this church shall consist of those who are now identified as congregation members and those who shall unite with it through baptism by immersion, or by transfer of membership, having previously been baptized as prescribed by another church/denomination. Voting privileges shall be accorded to all active congregation members.

ARTICLE III — Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities of the Congregation:

The congregation shall manage its affairs under the Lordship of Jesus Christ; determine its faithfulness to the gospel with respect to the basis of membership; own, control and encumber its property; organize and carry out the mission and witness of the congregation; establish its budgets and financial policies; call its Minister(s) and other staff. The congregation shall demonstrate voluntarily its mutual concern for the nurture, mission and witness of the whole church, and, among other responsibilities, it shall: proclaim the gospel; administer baptism and the Lord's Supper; provide for the spiritual nurture of its members; grow in understanding that the church is a universal fellowship; transcend all barriers within the human family such as race and culture; be faithful in Christian stewardship, striving to share proportionately in providing resources for the total life, work, witness and seek to realize the oneness of the church of Jesus Christ through cooperation with other churches of the community and with present and emerging ecumenical structures.

The congregation shall sustain its minister(s) in faithfulness and honor.

The congregation shall exercise and enjoy all other rights, privileges and responsibilities requisite or appropriate to carrying out its purpose.

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ARTICLE IV — Officers of the Church:

SECTION A — Officers Defined

1. Qualifications for the Elders shall be those set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Elders shall be members of the congregation named by the Board of Elders and shall be confirmed by the congregation.
2. Qualifications for Diaconate shall be those set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Diaconate shall be members of the congregation.

SECTION B — Election of Church Officers:

All of the above named Officers shall be elected as follows:

1. Nominations:
 - a. A committee consisting of the Minister (senior), the Chairperson of the Official Board, and one Elder shall select a nominating committee of 5 people composed of one Elder and two members of the Diaconate whose terms do not expire at the end of the current church year (one of the foregoing being designated Chairperson), and two members of the congregation who are not officers of the church.
 - b. The proposed nominating committee shall be approved by the Official Board no later than the September Board meeting and announced to the congregation the Sunday following the September board meeting.
 - c. Suggestions for nominations from the congregation shall be submitted to the nominating committee no later than the Sunday prior to the third Monday of September. The committee shall then consider qualifications, secure consent from nominees, and prepare a slate consisting of one nominee for each vacancy. No more than one member per family shall serve per term. (The committee shall be instructed by the Official Board concerning the vacancies to be filled). The nominating committee will report its slate of nominees to the Official Board for its approval or revision at the October board meeting.
 - d. The approved slate shall be posted no later than the first (1) of November.
2. Election:
 - a. Each congregation member present will cast a vote by secret ballot for individual officers as presented on the slate. These officers so elected, by simple majority in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, shall then take office at the January meeting of the Official Board.

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- b. In the event a nominee is not elected, the position will remain vacant until the new board takes office in January, at which time the position may be filled through the Interim Vacancy process.

SECTION C — Term of Office

- 1. No one person shall serve on the Official Board, with voting privileges, for more than two years in succession except as provided in paragraph 2b (4), not being able to succeed such a term on the Official Board for a period of at least one year after the close of the regular term of office.
- 2. Interim Vacancies:
 - a. Interim vacancies in church offices may be filled by the Official Board for the remainder of the church year *ONLY*.
 - b. The Chairperson of the Official Board shall appoint a committee from the Board (3 members) to nominate an interim replacement for board approval.
 - 1. The remainder of an unexpired term will then be filled by a duly nominated and elected person at the annual business meeting of the church.
 - 2. The person chosen by the Official Board to complete a current church year may be nominated and duly elected to fulfill the remaining year of an unexpired term.
 - 3. If elected to fulfill a remaining year of an unexpired term, that person will not be eligible for election to the Official Board for a period of one year from the completion of the remaining year of an unexpired term.
 - 4. The person filling an interim vacancy will be eligible for nomination and election to a full two-year term.

SECTION D — Termination of Office:

- 1. If anyone elected to the Official Board cannot, because of business or other reasons, be present for at least 1/2 of the regular board meetings of any church year, he or she shall be expected to resign.

ARTICLE V — The Official Board of the Church:

SECTION A — Composition of the Official Board:

The Official Board of the Church shall consist of the duly-elected officers of the congregation as described in Article IV, who have voting privileges on the Official Board, and the Minister(s) without voting privileges.

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SECTION B — Duties and Authority of the Official Board:

1. The control of all business of the Church shall be vested in the congregation members assembled together in a business session. The Congregation delegates' authority to the Official Board to transact all regular and ordinary business according to the provisions voted on and approved in the annual business meeting of the church. The Board shall have the authority to increase the annual budget up to 15% without congregational approval. This restriction does not apply to property damage covered by insurance proceeds.
2. It shall be the duty of the Official Board to:
 - a. Transact regular and ordinary business.
 - b. Consider and/or adopt general policies as submitted by the functional committees
 - c. Consider and recommend action to the Congregation on all special matters which require their attention.
 - d. Appoint committee chairs from the board.
 - e. Oversee and approve committee actions.
 - f. Report regularly to the congregation submitting a brief report of each meeting for publication in the church paper or newsletter, and making all records of the Official Board readily accessible to all congregation members.

SECTION C — Officers of the Official Board:

1. The Official Board shall elect from its membership for a term of one year, the following officers:

Chairperson
Vice-Chairperson
Secretary
Treasurer
2. A Parliamentarian, who need not be a member of the Official Board, will be appointed by the Official Board Chairperson.
3. If no Official Board member is available to serve as Treasurer, the Official Board may appoint a member of the congregation for a term of one year. The appointed Treasurer will comply with the duties as outlined in Section D.

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SECTION D — Duties of the Officers of the Official Board:

1. The Chairperson shall fulfill the usual duties of such an officer, call and preside at all regular or special business meetings of the congregation, serve as Chairperson of the Official Board. The Chairperson of the Official Board shall also serve as one of the official representatives of the church in legal matters.
2. The Vice-Chairperson shall fulfill the usual duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson and shall also serve as one of the official representatives of the church in legal matters.
3. The Secretary shall keep minutes of all regular or special business meetings of the church, serve as Secretary of the Official Board, keep a record of all its regular or called meetings, serve as one of the legal representatives of the church, and perform such other duties as may be assigned.
4. The Treasurer shall receive and make a record of all funds and deposit them in the proper church accounts, keep an individual account record of each contributor, send out statements as requested by donors, end of year statements, and/or *as directed by the* Official Board and serve as a member of the Administrative committee responsible for the church's financial business. The Treasurer shall disburse all funds of the church according to the authority designated by the Official Board, making regular reports to the church through the Official Board. The Treasurer shall also serve as one of the legal representatives of the church.
5. The Parliamentarian shall be acquainted with the Church's Constitution, Bylaws, and parliamentary procedure as prescribed by Robert's Rules of Order. When the Official Board or the congregation is in business session, the Parliamentarian should be ready to answer questions raised about the Constitution, Bylaws, or parliamentary procedure

ARTICLE VI — Minister(s)

SECTION A —Duties:

1. The Minister (senior) of the congregation shall be the spiritual leader of the congregation and, in cooperation with the Chairperson of the Official Board, administer the orderly procedures in the life and work of the congregation in compliance with the Constitution and Bylaws and the policies and procedures of the congregation and the Official Board.
2. The Minister shall assist in the selection and training of the congregation's leaders.
3. The Minister shall be an ex officio member, without vote, of all boards, committees, departments, commissions, task groups and constituency groups of the congregation.

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4. The Interim Minister, Youth Minister and any other Ministering Staff duties will be in compliance with the Constitution and Bylaws and the policies and procedures of the congregation. Elders and the Official Board when those opening become available.

SECTION B — Selection:

1. A committee of 5, nominated by the Chairperson and elected by the Official Board, shall serve as the Pulpit Committee and be responsible for recommending a prospective Minister to the Official Board. The pulpit committee shall consist of at least 1 elder, 1 diaconate, and 3 congregation members.
2. The Official Board shall consider the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee and, if approved by a majority of members present, recommend the prospective Minister to the church. It shall be the policy of the church to consider only one prospective Minister at a time.
3. The recommendation of the Official Board must be accepted by two-thirds majority of members present and voting in regular or special meetings of the church before a call may be extended.
4. A written statement setting forth the salary to be paid and other conditions of the call, stated in the Bylaws, shall be made with one copy for the Minister, one for the church, and one in the minister's personnel file.

SECTION C — Resignation:

The resignation of the Senior Minister shall be as hereinafter provided

1. Voluntary resignation of the Minister shall be submitted to the Official Board in writing, after consultation with the Chairperson and the elders for acceptance. The voluntary resignation shall be announced to the congregation members during a regular Sunday service. A copy of the minister's letter of resignation shall be posted on the bulletin board.
2. The Official Board shall approve the dismissal of the Minister by a two-thirds majority of members present and recommend approval to the congregation. The congregation, in a stated or called meeting, shall take final action in approving or disapproving by a two-thirds majority of members present, the dismissal of the Minister.
3. Involuntary resignation of the Minister shall be dealt with confidentially between the Minister, the Board Chairperson and the Elders.

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- 4, Voluntary/Involuntary resignations of Interim, Youth and/or other Ministering Staff will follow the same procedures as stated for the Senior Minister

ARTICLE VII — Meetings of the Church:

SECTION A — Meetings to be held: The church shall hold:

1. An annual business meeting in November each year.
2. Special meetings as required, such meetings to be called by the Chairperson or upon the request of the Official Board.

SECTION B — Notice of Meetings:

At least two weeks in advance of the meeting, notice of all regular or special business meetings of the congregation shall be given by written notice, posted on the church bulletin board, and announced at a regular Sunday morning service of the church. This notice shall include the place, date, time, and the stated purpose of the meeting.

SECTION C — Rules of Order:

All business meetings of the Church and the Official Board shall be governed by the Church's Constitution, Bylaws and Roberts' Rules of Order.

ARTICLE VIII— Amendments:

This constitution may be amended at any business meeting of the church by two-thirds vote of the congregation members present and voting on the amendment, provided that written notice of the proposed amendment has been available to each congregation member of the church and has been presented at a regular Sunday Service at least two weeks before the vote is taken. Such an amendment shall be recommended to the congregation by an Official Board member.

