

# The By-Laws of



*Approved by the Congregation June 21, 2023*

*(Last revision/adoption: June 21, 2023)*

## I. IDENTITY

This Congregation is known as Beargrass Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Congregation is a recognized expression of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. The Congregation maintains the rights and responsibilities set forth in The Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in which it is recognized. Namely, that each expression of the church has its own integrity and that in matters of its own life, ministry and mission, final authority rests with the Congregation. The Congregation maintains covenantal relationships with other Disciples of Christ congregations, with the region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kentucky, and with the general expression of the Church.

## II. MISSION & VISION

- A. The Mission of Beargrass Christian Church is to worship with hope, grow with love, and serve with a passion for justice.
- B. From time to time, the Executive Board, after conferring with the Mission Board, shall propose a Vision Statement to guide the growth and direction of the Congregation in living out its Mission.

## III. MEMBERSHIP

Membership consists of those who officially unite with the Congregation by confession of faith, baptism, or personal commitment to supporting the Mission Statement (which would include transfer of membership to this Congregation), in addition to all current members of the Congregation.

Membership may be withdrawn upon request of the Member, or death or transfer of the Member.

A Member's status may be changed to Inactive status with confirmation of the Executive Board after one year of absence from the life of the Congregation, or may be removed entirely upon approval by three-fourths (3/4) of the Executive Board.

## **IV. MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**

The Congregation shall meet no less than once per year, at least fifteen (15) days prior to the beginning of the year for election of leadership, approval of the budget, other business, and to address the State of the Congregation with an update on achieving its Mission and Vision.

When needed, special meetings of the Congregation are called by the Executive Board or upon a written petition of at least ten percent (10%) of Participating Members. A special meeting called by petition shall be limited to an agenda of items on the petition.

Participating Members shall be determined by the number listed in the most recent edition of the Disciples Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (or its successor publication).

A quorum for a regular or special meeting shall consist of at least twenty-five percent (25%) of adult Participating Members, whether participation occurs in person or remotely. All members in active status shall be eligible to vote at the Congregational meeting.

Notice of a Congregational Meeting shall be distributed electronically or by mail at least ten (10) days prior to the Meeting.

## **V. LEADERSHIP**

### **A. Qualifications.**

Those serving in leadership positions represent the Congregation in word and deed. As such, Congregational leaders shall be a committed Disciple who covenants to abide by the following qualifications:

1. Active participation in the life of the Congregation, including regular attendance in worship, programs, activities, and pertinent meetings;
2. Annual pledge and regular financial contributions to support the Mission and ministries of the Congregation;
3. Willingness to commit and fulfill responsibilities and assignments on behalf of the Congregation.
4. All leaders requiring election by a vote of the Congregation shall have served as an active member for at least one (1) year.

### **B. Election.**

A Congregational leader shall have demonstrated appropriate ability as determined by any nominating committee and confirmed by the process outlined in the corresponding section of these By-Laws.

### **C. Youth Elder/Deacon and Emeriti.**

Nothing in these By-Laws shall preclude the nomination and approval of Youth Elders/Deacons or Elder/Deacon Emeriti, whose qualification and appointment process shall be defined by the Executive Board.

### **D. Vacancies & Removal.**

1. A leader's resignation is effective upon receipt of written notice to the Executive Board Chair or on the date specified in the notice.
2. If a vacancy occurs in the office of Executive Board Chair, Mission Board Chair, or Treasurer, the Executive Board shall nominate a replacement within thirty (30) days for Congregational approval.
3. If a vacancy occurs for any other elected or appointed position, the corresponding Chair shall nominate a replacement to be approved by the Executive Board within thirty (30) days.

4. Any replacement fulfilling a vacancy shall serve the remainder of the original term length with the full rights and responsibilities of that role. The replacement may be eligible for election or appointment to that role again for one new term when the next leadership cycle begins.
5. An elected or appointed leader may be removed with a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Executive Board unless otherwise specified in these By-Laws.

**E. Leadership Year.**

For purposes of leadership, a year shall align with the fiscal year of the Congregation.

## **VI. EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### **A. Authority.**

The Executive Board shall have the ultimate authority to govern the business and affairs on behalf of the Congregation, in addition to making recommendations on matters that require approval through a Congregational vote, including:

1. Annual operating budget;
2. Congregational leaders that require election under these By-Laws;
3. The calling of a Senior Minister;
4. The acquisition of debt or property (or sale thereof) in excess of twenty percent (20%) of the amount of the annual budget.

### **B. Executive Committees.**

#### **1. Establishment & Delegated Authority.**

The Executive Board shall ensure proper governance and administrative oversight of the Congregation. Any committee established may be delegated with authority by the Executive Board. Such committees may include, but are not limited to, finance, nomination, personnel and property.

Any such committee shall regularly report to the Executive Board, and all official actions shall be reported in writing to the Executive Board by its next meeting. Recommendations from committees are subject to approval or modification by the Executive Board.

#### **2. Executive Committee Chairs.**

Chairs of Executive Committees shall be appointed by the Executive Board Chair upon advice of the Senior Minister and approved by the Executive Board to serve a one (1) year term. Consecutively, an Executive Committee Chair shall not serve more than three (3) terms.

Chairs may appoint members of their committees, subject to approval by the Executive Board. Chairs or committee members may be removed by a majority of the Executive Board.

### **C. Membership of Executive Board.**

Membership of the Executive Board shall consist of the following nine (9) elected officers:

**1. Executive Board Chair.**

The Executive Board Chair shall:

- a. Lead the Executive Board in fulfilling its responsibilities;
- b. Preside at all meetings of the Executive Board and Congregation;
- c. The Executive Board Chair shall be accountable to the Congregation for regular communication and updates on the work of the Executive Board. The Executive Board Chair shall appoint and direct a secretary to assist in providing regular communication regarding the Executive Board's pending and past general business to the Congregation. While the secretary is not a voting member of the Executive Board, the Secretary shall officially record the attendance and actions of meetings of the Congregation and the Executive Board. The secretary shall also prepare and distribute minutes of meetings and other documents, as directed by the Executive Board Chair.
- d. The Executive Board Chair shall serve as ex-officio member of all Executive Committees and Ministry Teams as desired.

**2. Mission Board Chair.**

- a. The Mission Board Chair shall lead the Mission Board in fulfilling its responsibilities and ensuring progress towards the Mission and Vision of the Congregation. The Mission Board Chair shall encourage active participation in Ministry Teams.
- b. The Mission Board Chair shall serve as ex-officio member of all Ministry Teams and Executive Committees as desired.
- c. The Mission Board Chair shall preside in the absence of the Executive Board Chair.

**3. Treasurer.**

- a. The Treasurer shall be accountable to the Executive Board by providing oversight of regular financial reporting, including accurate record keeping of all expenditures and regular written reports to the Executive Board.
- b. The Treasurer shall provide for an annual independent review of both income and expenditures for action by the Executive Board, in addition to performing such other duties normally associated with the role of Treasurer.
- c. The Treasurer shall serve as Chair of any finance/budget committee and preside over regular meetings of any such committee.

**4. Elder Chair.**

The Elder Chair shall provide representation of the Elders on the Executive Board.

**5. Deacon Chair.**

The Deacon Chair shall provide representation of the Deacons on the Executive Board.

**6. Four (4) At-Large Members.**

Four (4) At-Large Members shall be broadly representative of the Congregation as a whole.

The Senior Minister, who is accountable to the Executive Board, shall serve as an ex officio member without vote on the Executive Board. In addition, any Associate Minister may be invited to attend an Executive Board meeting as appropriate by the Senior Minister or Executive Board Chair.

**D. Meetings of the Executive Board.**

1. The Executive Board Chair shall preside at all stated and special called meetings of the Executive Board. Unless otherwise directed by the Executive Board Chair, notice of an Executive Board meeting shall generally be provided to the Congregation at least one week in advance. In the absence of the Executive Board Chair, the Mission Board Chair shall preside.
2. The Executive Board Chair shall determine the time and manner of Executive Board meetings, including whether to conduct business in-person, electronically, or by other appropriate means (including the option for streaming to those interested members of the Congregation). A quorum of the Executive Board shall consist of seven (7) or more of its members.
3. Executive Board meetings shall occur at least bi-monthly, and these meetings shall occur separately from Mission Board meetings.

**E. Election to the Executive Board.**

1. All members of the Executive Board shall be elected by the Congregation to serve for a two (2) year term. In proposing a slate of successive leadership, the Executive Board shall allow its nominating committee to receive open nominations from the Congregation.



2. The following offices shall be elected in even-numbered calendar years to begin terms the following calendar year:
  - a. Executive Board Chair
  - b. Elder Chair
  - c. Two (2) At-Large Members
3. The following offices shall be elected in odd-numbered calendar years to begin terms the following calendar year:
  - a. Mission Board Chair
  - b. Treasurer
  - c. Deacon Chair
  - d. Two (2) At-Large Members
4. Officers shall not be eligible to serve consecutive terms in the same office, with the exception of Treasurer who may be eligible for election to a maximum of one (1) successive term. Consecutively, a leader may serve no more than two (2) terms on the Executive Board.

## VII. MISSION BOARD

### A. Purpose.

The Mission Board shall serve the Congregation by coordinating its Ministry Teams toward implementing and achieving the Mission and Vision of the Congregation. The Mission Board is subject to oversight from the Executive Board, and all Ministry Teams, Chairs and actions therefrom shall be subject to approval by the Executive Board as deemed necessary.

### B. Membership of the Mission Board.

Membership of the Mission Board shall be composed of the Mission Board Chair, Executive Board Chair, the Chair of each Ministry Team, at least one (1) representative from both the Elders and Deacons (the Elder Chair and Deacon Chair may serve as this representative or may assign one or more Elders or Deacons to coordinate with the Mission Board), and all ministerial staff of the Congregation.

The Mission Board Chair may also create Divisions to organize the work of various Ministry Teams, and any such Division leader shall also be members of the Mission Board.

### C. Ministry Teams.

Ministry Teams may be established or modified as needed with the support of the Mission Board Chair, Executive Board Chair, and Senior Minister to coordinate the Mission and Vision of the Congregation. These Ministry Teams may include those that focus on worship, spiritual formation, mission & outreach, children & families, youth & young adults, or others created to support the Mission and Vision.

### D. Ministry Team Chairs.

The Chair of each Ministry Team shall be selected for a one (1) year term by the Mission Board Chair with the consent of the Executive Board Chair and Senior Minister, after consultation with the pertinent ministers and staff. Consecutively, a Ministry Team Chair shall not serve for more than three (3) terms. A Ministry Team Chair may select members of that team after consultation with the Mission Board Chair and pertinent staff, subject to approval by the Executive Board if it deems necessary. Chairs or Team Members may be removed by a majority of the Executive Board.

### E. Meetings of the Mission Board.

1. The Mission Board shall meet at least bi-monthly, to occur separately from Executive Board meetings.

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2. The Mission Board Chair shall preside at all stated and special called meetings of the Mission Board. Unless otherwise directed by the Mission Board Chair, notice of a Mission Board meeting shall generally be provided to the Congregation at least one week in advance, and the meeting shall be open to the Congregation. The Executive Board Chair shall preside in the absence of the Mission Board Chair.
3. The Mission Board Chair shall perform such other duties as needed, including communication to the Executive Board and the Congregation, as appropriate.
4. The Mission Board may utilize the Secretary of the Executive Board, if available, or the Mission Board Chair may appoint another individual to record the general work of the Mission Board.

## VIII. ELDERS

### A. Covenant of an Elder.<sup>1</sup>

Elders shall covenant to be responsible for the spiritual life and development of the Congregation by presiding at Communion, greeting and assimilating visitors into the Beargrass community, shepherding members of the Congregation, and generally supporting the ministers and other leaders regarding the care and spiritual life of the Congregation.

An individual not fulfilling the requirements shall be removed as an Elder or Elder-at-Large upon a motion of the Elder Chair and a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board.

### B. Elder Council.

The Elder Council shall be assigned responsibilities for ensuring proper order and function of the above tasks. After each three (3) year term on the Elder Council, an Elder shall have a minimum of one (1) year leave before being re-considered for a new term on the Elder Council.

### C. Elder-at-Large.

Upon completion of a three (3) year term on the Elder Council, an Elder shall continue to serve as Elder-at-Large for the remainder of their Membership in the Congregation, so long as they remain in good standing and continue to meet the qualifications of an Elder. An Elder previously ordained by the Congregation (prior to the ratification of these By-Laws) shall continue to serve as Elder-at-Large for so long as they continue to meet these same qualifications.

### D. Election of Elders.

Annually the Executive Board shall determine the appropriate number of new Elders to serve on the Elder Council by nominating individuals as Elder(s) for election by the Congregation.

### E. Elder Chair.

As outlined in section E.2 of Article VI, the Executive Board shall nominate to the Congregation an Elder to serve as Elder Chair for a term of two (2) years, who shall not serve consecutive terms. The Elder Chair shall lead the Elder Council and ensure its members are actively meeting their responsibilities and expectations of service.

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<sup>1</sup> Current version of the Elder Covenant is available at the link [here](#)

## IX. DEACONS

### A. Covenant of a Deacon.<sup>2</sup>

Deacons shall covenant to be responsible for providing leadership in the servant ministries of the Congregation, including greeting and service in worship and actively engaging in the life of the Congregation (including participation in teams, activities, and events that support the Mission).

An individual not fulfilling the requirements of Deacon shall be removed upon a motion of the Deacon Chair and a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board.

### B. Deacon Council.

The Deacon Council shall be assigned responsibilities for ensuring proper order and function of the above tasks. After each three (3) year term on the Deacon Council, a Deacon shall have a minimum of one (1) year leave before being re-considered for a new term on the Deacon Council.

### C. Election of Deacons.

Annually, the Executive Board shall determine the appropriate number of new Deacons to serve on the Deacon Council by nominating individuals as Deacon(s) for election by the Congregation.

### D. Deacon Chair.

As outlined in section E.3 of Article VI, the Executive Board shall nominate to the Congregation a Deacon to serve as Deacon Chair for a term of two (2) years, who shall not serve consecutive terms. The Deacon Chair shall lead the Deacon Council and ensure its members are actively meeting their responsibilities and expectations of service.

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<sup>2</sup> Current version of the Deacon Covenant is available at the link [here](#)

## **X. STAFF & MINISTERS**

### **A. All Staff.**

Staff shall perform the duties contained in their job description and as directed by those to whom they report under the personnel chart. Notwithstanding provisions in an applicable Letter of Call, staff shall comply with personnel policies of the Executive Board, and each is ultimately accountable to the Senior Minister for the performance of their duties.

### **B. Senior Minister.**

#### **1. Responsibilities.**

The Senior Minister shall:

- a. Serve as the spiritual leader of the Congregation;
- b. Serve as head-of-staff with the following responsibilities:
  - i. With approval of the Executive Board, select other ministerial staff (serving as chair in the search committee process) to serve in positions authorized by the Executive Board, or recommend conditions of employment or termination and terms thereon;
  - ii. Determine employment, conditions thereon, and termination of non-ministerial staff in positions authorized by the Executive Board; provided, however, there shall be a due process procedure defined by the Executive Board;
  - iii. Oversee and supervise ministerial and non-ministerial staff to work towards achieving the Mission and Vision of the Congregation.
- c. Serve as ex-officio member of Executive Committees and Ministry Teams as desired, or appoint a member of the staff for representation;
- d. Perform the duties outlined in the job description and be accountable to the Executive Board for his or her performance of duties as lead administrator of the Congregation.

#### **2. Selection.**

- a. Upon a vacancy, the Executive Board Chair, with the consent of the Executive Board, shall appoint a search committee broadly representative of the Congregation;

- b. The search committee shall consult with the Regional minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), conduct a search, and recommend a candidate to the Executive Board;
- c. The search committee chair shall prepare a Letter of Call setting forth a job description, salary, benefits and other conditions of employment subject to approval by the Executive Board, to be signed by the Executive Board Chair, search committee chair and the candidate upon acceptance of the call;
- d. The Executive Board shall recommend the candidate for election at a Congregational Meeting.

### **3. Separation.**

- a. In all cases of separation, the Senior Minister and Congregation shall seek to act in a Christian spirit. The Congregation shall be notified by the Executive Board Chair in writing (by mail or electronically) of the separation.
- b. In the case of voluntary separation, the Senior Minister shall submit a written resignation to the Executive Board with at least thirty (30) days notice.
- c. An involuntary separation shall require the consent of at least seven (7) members of the Executive Board to terminate the Senior Minister.
- d. In the case of any separation, the Senior Minister and the Executive Board shall attempt to agree on the terms of separation, and if they are unable to agree on the terms of separation, counsel from the Regional Minister shall be sought.

### **C. Associate Ministers.**

- 1. Associate Ministers shall be members of all Ministry Teams which fall within the purview of their official duties or as directed by the Senior Minister in consultation with the Mission Board Chair. Associate Ministers will devote themselves to implementing the Mission and Vision of the Congregation, giving special attention to the training, support, and guidance of Ministry Team Chairs.
- 2. Associate Ministers shall perform the duties contained in their job description and as directed by the Senior Minister.
- 3. In the case of voluntary separation, an Associate Minister shall submit a written resignation to the Executive Board Chair and Senior Minister with at least thirty (30) days notice.

## **XI. AMENDMENTS**

To amend these By-Laws, the Executive Board shall appoint a committee to prepare and present recommended amendments for adoption by the Congregation. Thirty (30) days written notice shall be given for a Congregational meeting to consider amendments. Copies of the proposed amendment(s) shall be available in the church office and on the church website. The Congregation may approve amendments with a majority vote upon a two-thirds (2/3) recommendation of the Executive Board.