

The
DESIGN

of the
Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
in the Southwest



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DESIGN
FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
IN THE SOUTHWEST

(as amended October 19-22,1990)

Preamble

1. As members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
We confess that Jesus is the Christ.
the Son of the living God,
and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world.
In Christ's name and by his grace .
we accept our mission of witness
and service to all people.
We rejoice in God,
maker of heaven and earth,
and in the covenant of love
which binds us to God and to one another.
Through baptism into Christ
we enter into newness of life
and are made one with the whole people of God.
In the communion of the Holy Spirit
we are joined together in discipleship
and are made one with the whole people of God.
At the table of the Lord
we celebrate with thanksgiving
the saving acts and presence of Christ.
Within the universal church
we receive the gift of ministry
and the light of scripture
In the bonds of Christian faith,
we yield ourselves to God
that we may serve the One
whose kingdom has no end.
Blessing, glory and honor
be to God forever. Amen¹

2. Transcending all barriers within the human family such as race and culture, the church manifests itself in ordered communities of disciples bound together for worship, for fellowship, and for service, and in varied structures for mission, witness, and mutual discipline, and for the nurture and renewal of its members.

3. In order that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest may faithfully express the ministry of Christ made known through scripture, may provide comprehensiveness in witness, mission and service, may assist congregations in fulfilling their ministries with faithfulness in Christian stewardship, may assure both unity and diversity, and may advance responsible ecumenical relationships, as a response to God's covenant, we commit ourselves to one another in adopting this Design.

Name

4. The name shall be the Christian Church (Disciples Of Christ) in the Southwest, hereinafter referred to as the CCSW. The Articles of Incorporation shall reflect the name as a not-for-profit religious corporation chartered under the laws of the state of Texas.

Purpose

5. The CCSW subscribes to the principles and purposes of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and is a region of that church.
6. The purpose of the CCSW is to witness to the Kingdom of God on earth through the proclamation of the lordship of Jesus Christ, to propagate the tradition and historic witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), to provide for its members opportunities for a more extensive fellowship, to provide the means for attainment of their aims and objectives through the practice of that loving cooperation Which is a heritage of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), to act on behalf of the whole church in matters mutually agreed upon by the general church and the CCSW, and to the extent herein specified, to act for and in behalf of the congregations of the CCSW in the discharge of their responsibilities.
7. Further, the CCSW will provide flexible channels through which the congregations can make decisions which will affect their own deeper inner life by exercising their responsibility to the church as it seeks
 - a. to extend the ministry of Christ in mission, witness and service among people and social structures;
 - b. to establish, receive and nurture congregations by providing help, counsel, and pastoral care to members, ministers, and congregations in their mutual relationship, and by relating them to the world-wide mission and witness of the whole church; and
 - c. to relate the three manifestations of the church-congregational, regional (including area) and general-to each other in the functioning of the whole church.

Membership

8. Congregations listed in the Southwest region section of statistical pages of the current Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are members of the CCSW. Each congregation is entitled to send voting representatives to the Regional Assembly of the church and is encouraged to join with and participate in the region, area and other cooperative structures of the church.
9. Congregations not listed in the current Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), may become members of the CCSW by Regional Council approval of the request for such listing.²
10. As a member of the whole body of Christ, every person who is a member of a recognized congregation of the CCSW thereby holds membership in the CCSW and in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
11. Other units and institutions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) located within or related» to the-Southwest region holding membership in the CCSW are: Texas Christian University, Jarvis Christian College, Juliette Fowler Homes, Inman Christian Center, Patriot Heights, and Good Samaritan Ministries.. Each of these units or institutions retains its identity and corporate style and no part of the assets of any one shall be vested in or liabilities assumed by the CCSW by reason of such membership.
12. An organization of a general administrative unit of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) located within or related to the Southwest region, may become a member of the CCSW by submitting an application in writing to the Regional Council, stating the desire of the organization to subscribe to the purposes of the CCSW, A vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those members of the Regional Council present and voting shall be required for acceptance to membership in the CCSW.
13. The Regional Council Shall determine procedures of recognition whereby other persons and groups who support the purposes of the CCSW, but who do not have access to membership in a recognized congregation, may participate in general and regional work of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
14. Recognized constituency groups and minority fellowships (Texas Christian Missionary Fellowship, Hispanic Convention of the Southwest, Christian Men's Fellowship, Department of Church Women and Southwest Christian Youth Fellowship) retain their identity for the development of their specific and unique programs* Their members already are members of the CCSW according to paragraphs 8 an 10.

Regional Assembly

15. The CCSW shall have a biennial assembly in each even-numbered year, alternating with the biennial General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at a time and place to be determined by the Regional Assembly. At each Regional Assembly the CCSW and its member units and institutions shall submit reports of their activities and finances in such form as may be appropriate.
16. All members of the CCSW who register for the Regional Assembly shall have all the privileges of the assembly, except that voting privileges shall be limited to the following:
 - a. Each member congregation shall be entitled to two (2) voting representatives. Each congregation of more than one hundred (100) participating! members shall be entitled to one (1) additional voting representative for each additional one hundred (100) participating members, or major fraction thereof. These voting representatives shall be in addition to persons holding the office of ordained or licensed minister. Ordained ministers residing in the region who have ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), shall be voting representatives.
 - b. Each member unit or institution listed in paragraph 11 shall be entitled to three voting representatives.
 - c. Each member of the Regional Council of the CCSW shall be a voting representative to the assembly with full privileges.
 - d. No person shall have more than one (1) vote in the Regional Assembly, and no person shall vote in absentia or by proxy.
 - e. Congregations, units and institutions may name alternates to replace voting representatives provided for in paragraphs above who are unable to attend.
17. The Regional Assembly shall
 - a. plan and conduct assembly programs for worship, for the education of its members, for fellowship and for the transaction of business;
 - b. receive and act upon proposed policy and program, reports and resolutions, and other items of business duly referred to it as hereinafter provided;
 - c. elect officers of the CCSW;

- d. approve the CCSW share of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) financial goals, approve the general budget for the CCSW and make other financial determinations for which it is responsible;
- e. conduct all business for which it is responsible. Except as provided for in this Design, a majority of the voting representatives, present and voting, in any business shall be sufficient to adopt any motion, or take any action, except that resolutions will require a two-thirds(2/3) majority for approval;
- f. provide for such committees as it may deem necessary, including but not limited to the following:
 - (1) the Credentials Committee, composed of not less than five (5) nor more than seven (7) members. This committee, including the chairperson, shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. The committee shall receive from the regional minister and president a list of the voting representatives and alternates accredited by the member congregations, and other institutions and units holding membership in the CCSW, and shall examine the credentials of such voting representatives. The committee shall determine through the registration process the total number of such voting representatives and alternates present, and shall certify this number to the moderator prior to the first scheduled business session.
 - (2) the Assembly Program Committee composed of not less than ten (10) nor more than twelve (12) members. This committee shall plan and be responsible for the preservation of the program of the assembly. The chairperson and members of the committee shall be appointed by the moderator in consultation with the Executive Committee.
 - (3) the assembly Local Arrangements Committee, chaired by a person resident in the city where the Regional Assembly is to be held. The committee shall be responsible for all physical arrangements relative to the assembly and shall* Work 'With the staff person designated director of the assembly. The chairperson and members of this committee shall be appointed by the moderator in consultation with the Executive Committee, the host area minister and ministers of congregations in the host city and the area moderator/president.

- (4) The Time and Place Committee, composed of not less than three (3) nor more than five (5) members. The chairperson of this committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. Invitations shall be solicited from prospective host cities, and the committee shall determine the adequacy of meeting and housing facilities in such cities, shall examine and weigh all factors relating to the selection of the site for the assembly, and shall submit its recommendation to the assembly for approval. Members of this committee shall be appointed by the moderator in consultation with the chairperson.
- (5) the Nominating Committee, including its chairperson, shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and shall consist of twelve (12) persons, including three (3) members of the Regional Council. The committee shall be broadly representative of the region, including ministers, laymen, laywomen, youth and ethnic minority persons.
 - (a) This committee shall meet at such a time as to complete its report not less than ninety (90) days prior to the opening of the regional assembly. The report shall be submitted in writing to the assembly through the Regional Council.
 - (b) The committee shall prepare a slate of candidates for every office whose election is assigned to the assembly. Written consent must be secured from each nominee before the name is presented for election.
 - (c) All other groups which elect officers whose confirmation is subject to the assembly shall present their slates through the Nominating Committee.
 - (d) Other nominations may be offered from the floor by any qualified voting representative, except that the written consent of each such person nominated from the floor shall be obtained prior to submitting the name for nomination.

- 18. AR items of business to be considered by the Regional Assembly, except in cases of emergency, shall be received by or originate with the Regional Council, Items of business may be filed by any congregation, unit or institution of the CCSW (or by the governing board of such a body) . Such items of business must be filed through the office of the regional minister at least ninety (90) days in advance of the meeting of the Regional Assembly in order to allow sufficient time for the Regional Council to review and refer them with appropriate recommendations to the Regional Assembly. All items of business shall be distributed to the congregations and to the Regional Council by the office of the regional minister at least thirty (30) days in advance of the Regional Assembly meeting.

19. An item of business may be considered an emergency if its content is of such nature that it could not have been regularly filed ninety (90) days prior to the assembly. Such items of business may be filed when submitted by ten (10) or more voting members of the assembly from not fewer than five (5) congregations to the Regional Council which shall decide whether such items are emergencies and, if so, make appropriate recommendations to the Regional Assembly as to their disposition.
20. A quorum for the transaction of business by the Regional Assembly shall be three hundred (300) accredited voting representatives from at least one hundred-member congregations, appearing at the time and place designated for the meeting of the Regional Assembly.
21. Special meetings of the Regional Assembly may be called by the Regional Council with not less than ninety (90) days' notice. In this event a quorum would be four hundred fifty (450) accredited voting representatives from at least one hundred fifty (150) member congregations, appearing at the time and place set forth in the notice and call of such special meeting.

Regional Council

22. There shall be a smaller deliberative body responsible to the Regional Assembly which shall be called the Regional Council Of the CCSW. The Regional Council shall be both legislative and programmatic. Under broad policies determined by the Regional Assembly, the Regional Council shall
 - a. receive, review and refer to the Regional Assembly with appropriate recommendations all items of business presented as provided in paragraphs 18 and 19;
 - b. establish priorities of the region;
 - c. establish task forces with specific time and budget limitations;
 - d. adopt and/or amend the procedures by which the CCSW may engage in planning its total program of work and witness;
 - e. develop a framework within which CCSW can reach its goals, carry out programs, build relationships and perform other functions;
 - f. receive, review and approve the financial objectives of CCSW;
 - g. appoint the following committees:

- (1) Personnel Committee-The Regional Council shall appoint the Personnel Committee made up of four elected officers plus two additional members of the Regional Council. This committee shall deal with staff relationships, evaluation and salary recommendations. This committee shall also offer to the Regional Council the nomination of the regional minister. At such time that the Personnel¹ Committee becomes the search committee for regional minister, it shall be expanded to include a representative of each area, appointed by the governing body of the area.
- (2) Budget Committee-The Regional Council shall appoint a Budget Committee made up of the regional minister and president and three members of the Regional Council. The Budget Committee shall prepare the regional budget to be presented to the Regional Council and the Regional Assembly for approval, and to the Commission on Finance of the general church for evaluation and funding recommendations.
- (3) Committee on to Ministry-The Regional Council shall establish a Committee on the Ministry. This committee shall be composed of one representative from each area, selected by his/her own area; six members-at-large appointed by the Regional Council; and no more than seven others who by their office in ministerial education and/or the church are deemed necessary.
- (4) Commission for Stewardship Development-The Regional Council shall establish a Commission for Stewardship Development. Members shall serve a term of five years, for no more than two consecutive terms. Membership on the commission shall be 10 to 15 in number and shall meet twice annually.

The commission shall interpret and focus the development of stewardship and accumulated resource programs; abide by the permanent fund policy of the CCSW; and report to the Regional Council annually.

- h. provide for salaried ministerial staff to lead in accomplishing the CCSW objectives;
- i. review personnel needs and the qualifications of persons recommended for professional staff positions in the central office of CCSW, determining the remuneration of and calling such persons, on recommendation of the regional minister and president;
- j. determine the number of areas and their boundaries;

- k. serve as a channel of communication regarding total CCSW work and witness, and participate in the work and witness of the whole church;
 - l. fill vacancies in positions to which persons regularly are elected by the Regional Assembly; and
 - m. assume and discharge such other responsibilities as may be assigned to it by the Regional Assembly.
23. The Regional Council shall manage the business of the CCSW and shall be vested with all necessary powers to do and perform, in behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest, Incorporated, all acts or things which Texas not-for-profit corporations can or may do, including, but not limited to the following:
- a. own property, both real and personal;
 - b. hold, use, improve, sell, lease, pledge, mortgage, convey or otherwise dispose of the same;
 - c. accept devises, bequests and gifts;
 - d. solicit subscriptions for money;
 - e. borrow and lend money and give and receive security therefor;
 - f. invest and reinvest monies and properties which may come into its hands; and
 - g. perform such duties as may be delegated by action of the Regional Assembly.
24. The Regional Council shall be composed of the following persons:
- a. The officers of the CCSW who shall also be the officers of the Regional Council;
 - b. One (1) member from each area of CCSW elected or appointed from that area for a term of two (2) years beginning, on July 1. Representatives of areas shall be eligible to serve no more than two (2) consecutive full terms.
 - (1) The following areas shall elect or appoint members to terms beginning in even-numbered years: Bluebonnet Area, Central. Area, Hi-Plains Area, and Trinity-Brazos Area. The following areas Shall elect of, appoint members to terms beginning in odd-numbered years: Coastal plains, Area, Dallas Area, Northeast Area and Tres Rids Area. The Rio Grande Valley District shall name its representative in an odd-numbered year. .

- (2) In selecting its member of the Regional Council an area shall consider selecting its moderator/president or another member of its principal governing body and shall strive to maintain a rotation of laywomen, laymen, ministers and ethnic minority persons in the interest of broad representation.
 - c. One (1) representative member from each of the constituency groups: Department of Church Women, Christian Men's Fellowship, Texas Christian Missionary Fellowship, Hispanic Convention of the Southwest and Southwest Christian Youth Fellowship. Constituency groups shall elect or appoint representatives to terms of two (2) years.
 - d. One (1) representative member from each of the member institutions: Texas Christian University, Jarvis Christian College, Juliette Fowler Homes, Inman Christian Center, Patriot Heights and Good Samaritan Ministries, but without vote. Institutions shall select their own representatives.
 - e. Two (2) members elected by the Regional Assembly from the regional members of the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - f. Regional minister and president ex-officio with vote.
 - g. Other members of the regional ministerial staff (central and area) ex-officio, but without vote.
 - h. One (1) representative of the Board of Directors of the South-Central Conference of the United Church of Christ with vote.
 - i. The chairperson of the Committee on Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest with vote.
25. A vacancy occurring within the Regional Council shall be filled immediately by the appropriate selecting body for the remainder of the unexpired term; except that vacancies occurring among the officers of the Regional Council shall be filled by appointment of the Regional Council upon recommendation of the Executive Committee, and persons thus appointed shall serve until adjournment of the Regional Assembly following their appointment.
26. Except for terms specified in paragraphs 24(b) and (c), terms of members of the Regional Council shall generally coincide with the terms of office to which they have been elected or appointed.
27. Regular meetings of the Regional Council shall be held at least annually at a time and place to be fixed by the Executive Committee, except that one meeting in the year in which the Regional Assembly convenes shall be held not more than ninety (90) days nor less than sixty (60) days prior to the beginning of the regular meeting of the Regional Assembly. One-half (1/2) of the voting membership of the Regional Council shall constitute a quorum. Special meetings of the Regional Council may be called by the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee

28. There shall be an Executive Committee of the Regional Council composed of the elected officers of the CCSW. The regional minister and president shall also be a member of the Executive Committee.
29. The officers of the Executive Committee shall be the same as the officers of the Regional Assembly and the Regional Council.
30. The Executive Committee shall meet as deemed necessary, at the call of the moderator, at times and places to be determined. The committee shall execute the resolutions and directives of the Regional Council when that body is not in session, and shall be vested with full powers to act when performing such duties and shall report its actions to the Regional Council.
31. The Executive Committee shall make appointments as specified in the Design.

Officers

32. There shall be two categories of officers:
 - a. The elected officers of the CCSW shall be a moderator, a moderator-elect, a Secretary and a treasurer. These officers shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee, with due regard to distribution between ministers, laymen, laywomen, minorities, etc., and elected by the Regional Assembly for two (2) years. The term of each officer shall commence upon adjournment of the assembly at which elected and shall continue until the adjournment of the assembly following.
 - b. Corporate officers of the CCSW shall be the regional minister and president, elected as specified in paragraph 35 and the secretary and treasurer of CCSW.
 - (1) The moderator shall preside at the sessions of the Regional Assembly, the Regional Council and the Executive Committee and assume such other responsibilities as may be assigned by these bodies. The moderator is a member ex-officio of all commissions, committees, task forces or groups of the church. Where appropriate, the moderator will be involved in the work of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and interdenominational and ecumenical bodies. The moderator shall appoint a parliamentarian who shall serve during the business sessions of the Regional Assembly and the Regional Council, advising on parliamentary questions which may arise. Unless otherwise provided, all proceedings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

- (2) The moderator-elect shall assist the moderator in presiding at sessions of the Regional Assembly, the Regional Council and the Executive Committee, and assume such other responsibilities as may be assigned by these bodies. The moderator-elect shall be the principal aide to the moderator and shall become moderator upon the completion of the moderator's term.
- (3) The secretary shall properly record the minutes of all regular and called meetings of the Regional Council and of the Executive Committee, as well as the proceedings of the Regional Assembly and any other meetings of the membership. Such minutes shall be prepared and delivered to the regional minister to be reproduced and distributed to the officers and members of the Regional Council. The permanent file of all minutes shall be kept in the CCSW office.
- (4) The treasurer, in cooperation with the CCSW business office, shall oversee the receipts and disbursements of CCSW funds in keeping with the authorization of the Regional Assembly, the Regional Council or the Executive Committee when each is acting within the scope of its authority.
- (5) The duties of the secretary and treasurer may, with the permission of the Regional Council, be delegated, but the responsibility for the discharge of these duties resides in the respective officers.
- (6) All officers of the CCSW shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the discharge of their various responsibilities. Such reimbursement for travel by automobile shall be set by the Regional Council.

33. The regional minister and president shall

- a. be concerned for the pastoral care and nurture of the CCSW;
- b. as the chief executive officer of the CCSW preside over meetings of the Regional Staff;
- c. be a member ex-officio of all other commissions, committees, task forces or groups of the church;
- d. represent the CCSW in interests of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and in matters of interdenominational or ecumenical relations, or may delegate duties.

34. The Office of the regional minister and president shall be executive and pastoral. However, the regional minister and president shall have no authority to ordain ministers, or to assign or to recall the same, or to proceed to any disciplinary or punitive action against any minister or lay person.

35. The regional minister and president shall be elected by the Regional Council upon nomination by the Personnel Committee for a term of six (6) years, and may re-elected. Normal Suggested retirement from this office may be at the close of the Region Assembly following attainment of age 65. A regional minister and president may be removed from office by action of the Regional Council. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the regional minister and president, the Executive Committee shall name the person to act until the next meeting of the Regional Council.

Area Structures

36. Identifiable geographical, cultural, sociological and political factors provide boundaries which the CCSW may use to establish its Own structures to
- a. provide "closer-by"¹¹ pastoral care of congregations and ministers;
 - b. provide assistance to ministers in relocating and congregations in securing ministers;
 - c. provide opportunities for fellowship, worship, leader development, and camp and conference opportunities;
 - d. provide consideration of matters of mutual concern, such as establishment of new congregations and support system for clusters of ministers;
 - e. extend the ministry of Christ in mission, witness, service and nurture through participation in and implementation of the CCSW program.
37. Each area shall have an appropriate organizational structure through which to accomplish its own purpose and program. In its organization, objectives, duties, functions and procedures, the area shall follow the design of the CCSW insofar as it is applicable, and the area minister shall be liaison staff of the region. The area board or cabinet shall act in an advisory capacity to the Regional Council in matters pertaining to the work of the area, and insofar as is possible, shall carry out the program of the CCSW.
- a. Insofar as is possible, each area shall organize itself in such a way as to have comparable program committees, or task groups, with the CCSW, and the chairperson of each committee, or task group, will be involved in program planning in the regional process.
 - b. Areas may apply for membership in the Texas Conference of Churches, or the New Mexico Conference of Churches.

Amendments

38. This Design may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) majority of those voting representatives present and voting at the Regional Assembly.
39. Amendments to this Design may be proposed by any member congregation, or by any institution or unit, or by any group of not less than ten (10) persons who are members of congregations of the CCSW, or by the Regional Council.
40. Proposals for amending this Design shall be submitted in writing to the regional minister and president not less than ninety (90) days prior to the opening date of the Regional Assembly, and the regional minister and president shall cause the full text of each proposed amendment to be distributed by having it published in The Christian Courier not less than thirty (30) days prior to the opening date of the Regional Assembly.

Endnotes

1. From the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

2. Procedure for Gaining Year Book and Directory Listing.
 1. Congregation seeking listing (recognition) takes congregational action expressing its desire and intention to be a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and to be listed in the church's Year Book and Directory.

 2. The congregation provides the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest two copies of a document containing the declaration of its desire and intention to be a recognized Disciples congregation (this document may be the congregation's charter, constitution or bylaws, or a notarized report of the congregation's action, a form for which is available from area or central offices of CCSW). The request for listing is filed initially with the area of CCSW to which the congregation is related.

 3. When the proper area has endorsed the request for listing, It is forwarded to the office of the regional minister and president for consideration of endorsement in the next meeting of the Regional Council.

 4. Regional endorsement of the congregation's request for recognition and listing, attested by the regional minister and president, is sent to the office of the general minister and president for filing with the Year Book and Directory.

 5. Once a congregation has been listed, it can be omitted from the Year Book and Directory if the congregation has taken action to withdraw as a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the office of the general minister and president has received a notarized statement from the congregation of its action which the regional minister and president has certified.