

2 AMENDMENTS TO THE DESIGN
3 OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

4 (Operational, Policy and Organizational)

5 **WHEREAS**, the Standing Rules of the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples
6 of Christ) in the United States and Canada require that the Governance Committee of
7 the General Board “. . . shall review *The Design* and other governance documents for
8 suggested changes and modifications;”¹ and,

9 **WHEREAS**, the Governance Committee, having discerned a need for the Church to
10 reexamine our understanding of God’s covenant with us and Disciples’ covenant with
11 one another considering unprecedented challenges facing the whole Church; and,

12 **WHEREAS** the whole Church has been given important work to do: we are called by
13 God to make disciples of Jesus Christ, equip disciples to work from their spiritual gifts,
14 coordinate that work more effectively, and be faithful stewards of our resources; and,

15 **WHEREAS**, we are committed to being a “movement for wholeness in a fragmented
16 world,” even as the landscape of the church is changing; and,

17 **WHEREAS**, we want all expressions of the church to be more connected to each other
18 and to have more of a voice in the present and future of the church; and,

19 **WHEREAS**, participation in General Assembly every two years prior to the pandemic of
20 2020 was declining; and,

21 **WHEREAS**, during the pandemic the Church developed digital competencies we did not
22 have which now make it possible to have more conversations, more often, about issues
23 and opportunities vital to the mission and ministry of the whole Church; and,

24 **WHEREAS**, the pandemic also helped us more fully recognize and appreciate the
25 importance of gathering regularly in person; and,

26 **WHEREAS**, the Governance Committee, having produced and propagated resources
27 for the Church in all its expressions, offered multiple opportunities for curated
28 conversations that have informed the work of identifying and making recommendations

29 for the work of the Church to be even more closely aligned with our renewed
30 appreciation for covenant-keeping;¹

31 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that changes in the language of the Design of the
32 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada as indicated in
33 the following **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE DESIGN OF THE**
34 **CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE UNITED STATES AND**
35 **CANADA** be adopted by this General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of
36 Christ) in the United States and Canada meeting in Louisville, Kentucky July 29 –
37 August 1, 2023; and,

38 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the approved changes in the language of the
39 Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada be
40 implemented following the conclusion of the 2025 General Assembly of the Christian
41 Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada; and,

42 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that an Implementation Team be appointed by the duly
43 elected Moderator of the General Assembly and affirmed by the Administrative
44 Committee to report its progress to the General Board at its next regularly scheduled
45 meeting regarding a plan for implementing adopted changes, including
46 recommendations for sufficient funding and staffing ; and,

47 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, to facilitate the implementation of these Design changes
48 adopted in this resolution that the following proviso is adopted: if the current General
49 Minister and President is reelected to serve a second term, the term shall be for an 8-
50 year term instead of the 6-year term identified in the Design, with the 8-year term
51 concluding at the end of the 2031 in-person General Assembly; and,

52 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the General Board and its committees shall have the
53 authority to meet digitally as needed until the Design changes adopted in this resolution
54 come into effect; and

55 **FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Board shall have authority to act on
56 behalf of the General Assembly as needed to implement the changes adopted in this
57 resolution.

58
General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

¹ For more information about the work of the Governance Committee, including a list of
Frequently Asked Questions, visit www.disciples.org/covenant-project.

59

BACKGROUND

60 *The Journey*

61 The proposal presented in this resolution is the result of several years of work by the
62 Governance Committee of the General Board, in what became known as the Covenant
63 Project. When Governance Committee of the General Board met in retreat in the fall of
64 2019, they committed to the work of aligning the Design of the Christian Church
65 (Disciples of Christ) with God's design for the church, and to claim the power and
66 potential of covenant. To that end, the committee took two important steps: the first was
67 the development of the Covenant Conversations Curriculum, a small group resource for
68 congregations to explore their identity as covenantal partners in the wider church. The
69 second was a process of a review of the Design, with an aim to explore how the
70 church's structures and practices might shift to better serve the church, with two main
71 areas of focus. The first area of evaluation was the General Assembly, which refers to
72 not just a gathering but the governing body of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
73 in the United States and Canada. The second area of evaluation was centered around
74 the General Board.

75 In the fall of 2020, The Governance Committee presented to the Administrative
76 Committee a framework of possible changes to The Design. Those changes were also
77 reviewed by groups of church leaders including the General Cabinet and the College of
78 Regional Ministers. In April 2021, a refined framework was presented to the General
79 Board for review and comment.

80 One year later, at the 2022 General Board meeting, the Governance Committee again
81 presented a further refined framework and proposed changes for the Board to engage
82 in discernment, dialogue, and prayer.

83 In the summer and fall of 2022, clergy, congregations and leadership across the church
84 were invited to attend a series of digital and in person town hall-style listening sessions.
85 Hundreds of Disciples participated in dozens of these sessions and their feedback
86 helped to affirm the work of the Governance Committee and fine-tune the
87 recommendations for the proposed changes.

88 In our aspirations of and commitment to being a movement for wholeness,
89 conversations and questions around this topic (particularly the role and make up of the
90 General Board) is not new. Resolutions came to the General Assembly in 1997 and
91 2005 and were close to passing but ultimately failed. Conversations around Mission
92 First! that the General Assembly adopted in 2015 had a board restructure component
93 that helped inform and empower the Governance Committee of the General Board to
94 move forward in imagining a structure that serves and enhances the mission, purpose,

95 and identity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and
96 Canada. While these changes were not implemented, they laid the groundwork for the
97 work before us now.

98 ***Proposed Changes***

99
100 The proposed changes call for the General Assembly to meet more often during a
101 three-year cycle. Every three years, there will be a hybrid meeting, with opportunities for
102 participation in person and online; in the other two years of the cycle, the Assembly will
103 meet in online-only gatherings. This change will allow more people to participate in the
104 General Assembly and engage in a variety of ways. Under the new General Assembly
105 model, congregations will appoint three representatives to serve three-year terms.
106 Representatives to the General Assembly will shift the focus of their work from primarily
107 voting on resolutions to engaging in dialogue, discernment, and prayer with increased
108 frequency. With more regular meetings and dialogue, representatives will provide
109 feedback from their congregational and Regional circles about the priorities of the
110 church to the General Board. The new model, along with different meeting formats, will
111 increase the number of voices from across the church who will be engaged in this work,
112 particularly including those who have not always had access to decision-making
113 structures. Congregational representatives will serve three-year staggered terms, with
114 one representative being new each year. This model provides continuity of participation
115 in the General Assembly meetings while developing new leaders.

116 The proposal also calls for changes to the General Board. Currently, the General Board
117 consists of representatives chosen from each of the general and regional ministries, the
118 executive leaders of each of those ministries, at-large members selected by the General
119 Nominating Committee, ecumenical representatives and representatives from colleges
120 and universities, along with the elected officers of the General Assembly. In the new
121 model, the General Board will become a working board that meets more often than
122 once a year. Members will serve on one of three committees: Mission, Finance, and
123 Executive. Committees will meet and work together on an ongoing, regular basis. The
124 General Board will be reduced in size. Rather than the board having representatives
125 from regions and general ministries, board members would be mostly at-large and
126 selected by the General Nominating Committee for essential skills and experience,
127 while also reflecting the diversity of the church.

128 The General Board will receive missional priorities from the congregational
129 representatives who are gathering for dialogue and discernment through more frequent
130 General Assemblies. The General Board will also act on behalf of the church in making
131 statements of social witness following the church's engagement at General Assemblies,
132 establishing mission priorities, acting on policies and procedures as needed,

133 maintaining 501(c)3 status, recommending changes to The Design and approving
134 regional boundary changes. Stewardship will become a core responsibility of the
135 General Board, which would regularly evaluate, revise and improve the church-wide
136 funding system.

137 ***The Way Ahead***

138 If adopted, the proposed changes to the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of
139 Christ) in the United States and Canada will be implemented following the conclusion of
140 the 2025 General Assembly.

141

142 The General Assembly Committee (informally known as the Time and Place
143 Committee), will begin planning for an in-person Assembly to be held in 2028.

144

145 The Moderator of the General Assembly will appoint an Implementation Team which
146 will begin their work as soon as possible.²

147

148 *Purpose*

149 The Implementation Team will work to assist the General Board to put into effect
150 the changes proposed in GA-2343.

151

152 *Accountability*

153 The Implementation Team is accountable to the Administrative Committee of the
154 General Board. The Implementation Team members and members of any special
155 task groups may or may not be members of the General Board.

156

157 *Membership*

158 The Implementation Team will include a minimum of seven individuals recruited
159 for the skills they bring to complete the work described above, with a commitment
160 to the wide diversity of the church. Composition of the team will be
161 communicated to the General Board and the wider church.

162

163 The Implementation Team will have authority to enlist the help of individuals to
164 serve on a short-term basis or in longer-term task groups, taking advantage of
165 the covenant-commitment, talent, and wisdom from the wider church.

166

167 *Scope of Work*

168 The Implementation Team will collaborate closely with the Governance
169 Committee of the General Board which is responsible for recommending
170 revisions to the Special Rules of the General Assembly and the Standing Rules
171 of the General Board to accommodate the changes necessary after the approval
172 of GA-2343. The Implementation Team will meet as necessary to do its work
173 prior to the General Assembly in 2025, consulting with the regional ministers,
174 general ministry leaders, and other church leaders for input and collaboration.

² The Standing Rules of the General Board 10.1, 10.2, and 10.6

175
176 The Implementation Team will work closely with the Office of the General Minister and
177 President and other leaders to develop a plan for implementing the proposed changes,
178 including recommendations for sufficient funding and staffing resources. The
179 Implementation Team will report regularly to the Administrative Committee and the
180 General Board, which will have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the General
181 Assembly as needed to begin implementing the changes.

182 The Governance Committee will continue working, in close collaboration with the
183 Implementation Team, to revise governing documents, such as the Standing Rules for
184 the General Board, as appropriate to implement the changes.³

**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-2343.
(Discussion Time: 48 minutes)**

³ The Standing Rules of the General Board 6.2.5.

1 ***PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE DESIGN***
2 ***OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE***
3 ***UNITED STATES AND CANADA***

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6 ***Proposed insertions are indicated with underlined text; proposed deletions are***
7 ***indicated with strikethrough text.***
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14 ***THE DESIGN OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)***

15
16 **PREAMBLE**

17
18 As members of the Christian Church,
19 We confess that Jesus is the Christ,
20 the Son of the living God,
21 and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world.
22 In Christ's name and by his grace
23 we accept our mission of witness
24 and service to all people.
25 We rejoice in God,
26 maker of heaven and earth,
27 and in God's covenant of love
28 which binds us to God and to one another.
29 Through baptism into Christ
30 we enter into newness of life
31 and are made one with the whole people of God.
32 In the communion of the Holy Spirit
33 we are joined together in discipleship
34 and in obedience to Christ.
35 At the Table of the Lord
36 we celebrate with thanksgiving
37 the saving acts and presence of Christ.
38 Within the universal church
39 we receive the gift of ministry
40 and the light of scripture.
41 In the bonds of Christian faith
42 we yield ourselves to God
43 that we may serve the One
44 whose kingdom has no end.
45 Blessing, glory, and honor
46 be to God forever. Amen.
47

48 1. Within the whole family of God on earth, the church appears wherever believers in Jesus
49 the Christ are gathered in His name. Transcending all barriers within the human family, the one
50 church manifests itself in ordered communities bound together for worship, fellowship, and
51 service; in varied structures for mission, witness, and mutual accountability; and for the nurture
52 and renewal of its members. The nature of the church, given by Christ, remains constant
53 through the generations, yet in faithfulness to its nature, it continues to discern God's vision and
54 to adapt its mission and structures to the needs of a changing world. All dominion in the church
55 belongs to Jesus, its Lord and head, and any exercise of authority in the church on earth stands
56 under His judgment.

57
58 2. Within the universal Body of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is
59 identifiable by its testimony, tradition, name, institutions, and relationships. Across national
60 boundaries, this church expresses itself in covenantal relationships in congregations, regions,
61 and general ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), bound by God's covenant of
62 love. Each expression is characterized by its integrity, self-governance, authority, rights, and
63 responsibilities, yet they relate to each other in a covenantal manner, to the end that all
64 expressions will seek God's will and be faithful to God's mission. We are committed to mutual
65 accountability. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and
66 constantly seeks in all of its actions to be obedient to his authority.

67
68 3. We commit ourselves to one another and to God in adopting this *Design* for the Christian
69 Church (Disciples of Christ) in order that we may faithfully express the ministry of Christ, made
70 known through scripture; provide Christian witness, mission, evangelism, and service from our
71 doorsteps to the ends of the earth; furnish means by which all expressions of the church may
72 fulfill their ministries with faithful Christian stewardship; assure unity in Christ while respecting
73 diversity; and work as partners in ecumenical and global relationships.

74
75 4. In keeping with this *Design*, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall establish,
76 receive, and nurture congregational ministries; provide for regional and general ministries and
77 such other organizations as may be required; have a General Assembly, and a General Board, ;
78 ~~and an Administrative Committee of the General Board;~~ define policies and criteria for its Order
79 of Ministry; develop or recognize new forms of ministries for mission and witness; maintain
80 appropriate relationships with institutions of higher education historically related to the Christian
81 Church (Disciples of Christ); provide appropriate consultation and procedures whereby existing
82 organizations may make any necessary transition within the provisions of this covenant; and
83 engage in continuing renewal, reformation, and adaptation as necessary to minister in the world.

84 85 **NAME**

86
87 5. The name of this body shall be the CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST).

88 89 **MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION**

90
91 6. As a member of the whole Body of Christ, every person who is or shall become a
92 member of a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) thereby
93 holds membership in the region in which that congregation is located-recognized and in the
94 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

95
96 7. Regions and general ministries may develop procedures of recognition whereby other
97 persons and groups who support the purposes of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) can
98 participate in regional and general work.

100 CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRIES

101

102 8. Congregations constitute the primary expression of the community of faith within the
 103 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Through congregations, individuals are brought to the
 104 saving grace of Christ, baptized into the Body of Christ, nurtured in their faith, and gather at the
 105 Lord's Table. Joined in discipleship, congregations partner with their regions and the general
 106 ministries of the church to share the good news from their doorsteps to the ends of the earth.

107

108 RECOGNIZED CONGREGATIONS

109

110 9. All congregations listed in the latest *Year Book and Directory* of the Christian Church
 111 (Disciples of Christ) shall be recognized congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of
 112 Christ). Other congregations desiring recognition and congregations desiring to withdraw from
 113 recognition in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall follow established procedures for
 114 *Year Book and Directory* listing. Congregations that follow the procedures for listing after the
 115 publication of the latest *Year Book and Directory* and that are recorded in the *Year Book and*
 116 *Directory* office shall also be recognized congregations.

117

118 a. A congregation seeking recognition takes congregational action expressing its desire
 119 and intention to be a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of
 120 Christ) and be listed in the *Year Book and Directory*.

121

122 The congregation then provides its regional office with a copy of a document containing
 123 the declaration of its desire and intention to be a recognized congregation of the
 124 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The document may be the congregation's charter,
 125 constitution, bylaws, or a notarized statement of the congregation's action.

126

127 Regional endorsement of the congregation's request for recognition and listing, attested
 128 by the regional minister, is sent to the Office of General Minister and President for filing
 129 with the *Year Book and Directory*.

130

131 b. Once a congregation has been listed, it can be omitted from the *Year Book and*
 132 *Directory* if:

133 i. The congregation has taken action to withdraw as a recognized congregation
 134 of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Office of General Minister
 135 and President has received a notarized statement from the congregation of its
 136 action, which the regional minister has certified; or

137

138 ii. There has been no congregational activity reported in the *Year Book and*
 139 *Directory* of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for a period of five (5)
 140 consecutive years and the regional minister certifies that the congregation does
 141 not participate in or contribute to area, regional or general church program(s),
 142 including participation in ~~Disciples Mission Fund~~the church-wide mission funding
 143 system.

144

145 iii. A congregation may also be omitted from the *Year Book and Directory* by
 146 action of a region if the region can demonstrate actions or statements on the part
 147 of the congregation that are deemed detrimental to the covenantal relationship
 148 with all expressions of the church. When a region takes action to omit a
 149 congregation for either of the above stated reasons, the region will send

150 notification of the intent to remove the congregation's listing to the congregation
151 via certified letter. If within thirty (30) days of the notification, the congregation
152 makes no objection to its removal from the listing, then the removal will be final.

153
154 iv. Regardless of which entity initiates the action, reasonable attempts will be
155 made to renew the relationship between the congregation and the region before
156 removal is finalized. Once the removal is final, the region will notify the
157 congregation that it has been removed from the *Year Book and Directory*. A
158 congregation may appeal the region's action in accordance with paragraphs 17
159 and ~~66-64e~~ of this *Design*.

160
161 **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

162
163 10. In adopting this *Design*, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) affirms that
164 congregations in their freedom in Christ have both rights and responsibilities. As part of the
165 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), congregations share creatively in the church's total
166 mission of witness and service. Equally, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in its general
167 and regional ministries sustains congregations through commitment to their welfare and needs.
168 Thus, concern for the integrity of each expression is shared and witness is given to the
169 interrelatedness of the whole church.

170
171 11. Among the rights recognized and safeguarded to congregations are the rights to
172 manage their affairs under the Lordship of Jesus Christ; to adopt or retain their names,
173 corporate documents, and organization of ministry; to determine, in faithfulness to the gospel,
174 their practices; to own, control, and encumber their property; to organize for carrying out the
175 mission and witness of the church; to establish their budgets and financial policies; to call their
176 ministers; and to participate through voting representatives in forming the corporate judgment of
177 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

178
179 12. Among the responsibilities by which congregations demonstrate their mutual concern for
180 the mission and witness of the whole church are the responsibilities to proclaim the gospel and
181 administer baptism and the Lord's Supper; to provide for the spiritual nurture of their members
182 and families; to grow in understanding that the church is a universal fellowship, transcending all
183 barriers within the human family, working for reconciliation across racial and ethnic lines; to
184 engage in evangelism; to sustain their ministers in faithfulness and honor and, in matters
185 pertaining to relationships with them, to seek counsel from the regional minister; to be faithful in
186 Christian stewardship, striving to share proportionately in providing the resources for the total
187 life, work, and witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); to choose voting
188 representatives to the General and Regional Assemblies; to share with other ministries of the
189 church in the establishment and nurture of new congregations; and to seek to realize the
190 oneness of the church of Jesus Christ through cooperation with other congregations and with
191 present and emerging ecumenical structures.

192
193 13. While congregations are responsive to the needs of general and regional ministries, as
194 established through the participation of the congregations' representatives in the General and
195 Regional Assemblies, all financial support of the general and regional programs of the Christian
196 Church (Disciples of Christ) by congregations and individuals is voluntary.

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200

201 **REPRESENTATION IN REGIONAL AND GENERAL ASSEMBLIES**

202
203 14. Congregations are represented in the General Assembly by voting representatives of
204 their choosing. Each congregation is entitled to be represented in the General Assembly by ~~two~~
205 ~~three~~ voting representatives, ~~plus one additional voting representative for each 100 participating~~
206 ~~members or major fraction thereof over the first 100~~. These voting representatives shall be in
207 addition to the congregation's ordained and licensed-commissioned ministers, who are voting
208 members as provided in paragraph ~~38e39c~~.

209
210 15. Congregations may submit items ~~of business~~ for consideration by the General Assembly
211 by filing such items with the General Board through the Office of the General Minister and
212 President ~~at least 180 days in advance of a meeting of the General Assembly~~. Congregations
213 will receive from the Office of the General Minister and President notification of a General
214 Assembly meeting and a copy of all items ~~of business~~ to be considered by the General
215 Assembly at least 60 days in advance.

216
217 16. Congregations are represented in their Regional Assemblies according to the provisions
218 of the corporate documents and organization of their respective regions.

219
220 17. Congregations and individuals exercise their rights and responsibilities by participating
221 through their voting representatives in the General and Regional Assemblies, of which they are
222 a part. In the fulfillment of their ministries, congregations are encouraged to hold in high regard
223 the actions, decisions, and recommendations of these Assemblies, expressing in love any
224 dissent from such actions or positions. Where other procedures have not been provided by the
225 General Assembly or General Board, matters of grievance and appeal may be referred by
226 congregations and individual members through the Office of General Minister and President to
227 the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General Board, as provided in paragraph ~~6662e~~.

228
229 **REGIONAL MINISTRIES**

230
231 18. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) also expresses itself in geographic ministries
232 called regions. The following principles shall guide the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in
233 the development of its regions.

234
235 **NATURE AND PURPOSE**

236
237 19. The primary nature of regions is drawn from the Acts of the Apostles in Paul's desire to
238 nurture, support, and engage congregations as unique entities and as gatherings of
239 congregations related to one another in their mission. Regions should embody the character of
240 the ministry to which Christ calls His people in their mutual commitment to Him and to one
241 another.

242
243 20. The primary purpose of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in regions is twofold:

244
245 1) to extend the ministry of Christ in mission, teaching, witness, and service among the
246 people and social structures of the region; and

247
248 2) to establish, receive, and nurture congregations in the region, providing help, counsel,
249 and pastoral care to members, ministers, and congregations in their mutual
250 relationships, and relating them to the worldwide mission and witness of the whole
251 church.

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MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

21. As a member of the whole Body of Christ, every person who is or shall become a member of a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) thereby holds membership in the region in which that congregation is ~~located~~recognized.

FUNCTION

22. Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) perform within their established boundaries the function of the church related to their two-fold purpose of mission and nurture:

23. *Mission.* In fulfilling the mission of the church, regions are sensitive to the needs of the world about them and lead their members in identifying and serving such human needs. Regions take initiative in developing new forms of ministries in mission, witness, and service, and in dealing creatively with their roles in the whole task of the church. Wherever ecumenical action is possible to fulfill their mission, regions should join with similar geographic units of other religious bodies and with present and emerging ecumenical structures.

24. *Nurture.* Regions are concerned for the continuing renewal of the life of congregations, members, and ministers, and offer leadership in matters of mutual concern. Within policies developed by the General Assembly, regions provide help, counsel, and pastoral care to ministers and congregations in such matters as standing and credentialing of ministers, ministerial search and call, ordination, ~~licensing~~commissioning, establishment and dissolution of pastoral relationships, and installations of ministers. Regions seek to supply ministry for congregations without full-time pastoral services and to offer counsel and assistance in cases of difficulties between ministers and congregations.

25. As an integral part of the whole church, regions witness to the unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) by calling congregations to an awareness of their opportunities and responsibilities beyond local concerns. They also help to relate congregations to the total ministry of the whole church including working for reconciliation across racial and ethnic lines. By calling the general expression of the church to an awareness of the needs both of congregations and of regions, the regions help to relate the general expression to the life and work of congregations.

26. Governing and enabling documents of regions shall be in harmony with this *Design*. Updated copies should be filed with the Office of General Minister and President.

SHAPE AND BOUNDARIES

27. Identifiable geographic, cultural, sociological, and political factors provide boundaries, which the church may use to establish its own regional structures

- (1) by which the church carries out regionally its ministry of mission and nurture;
- (2) in which congregations and ministers find their primary relationships of mutual support and encouragement;
- (3) which provide opportunities for regional fellowship, worship, and assembly for the consideration of matters of mutual concern; and
- (4) which help to relate the three expressions of the church — congregational, regional, and general — to one another in the functioning of the whole church.

303
304 Regions may vary in size and shape. It is recognized that, in response to the changing
305 imperatives of mission and the conditions of human life, new expressions of the church may
306 emerge in the process of developing the shape and boundaries of the regions of the Christian
307 Church (Disciples of Christ).
308

309 28. The General Board shall provide procedures for the continuing modification of the shape
310 and boundaries of existing regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in keeping with
311 the principles set forth in this *Design*.
312

313
314 29. In the development of any new regional boundaries, existing regional organizations shall
315 remain intact, subject to modification by mutual consent of the regions involved, in the light of
316 the corporate judgment of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as expressed through the
317 General Assembly Board. The process of reshaping regional boundaries (even if only one
318 congregation is affected) includes the participation and approval of the parties involved, ~~the~~
319 ~~Administrative Committee, and~~ the General Board, ~~and the General Assembly~~.
320

321 **STRUCTURE AND STAFF**

322

323 30. Regions develop their particular structures and organization for the most effective
324 fulfillment of their ministry and mission. Regions may establish or recognize area or district
325 organizations within their boundaries. Regions secure or retain their own governing documents
326 and formulate their declarations of covenantal relationship, consistent with the principles of this
327 *Design*. With due regard for the welfare of the other expressions of the church as a whole,
328 regions exercise rights and responsibilities as they share creatively in the total mission of
329 witness and service. Regions own and manage their property, determine their budgets, and
330 administer regional finances within the limits of resources available. Through their Assemblies,
331 regions provide for worship, for the education of their members, for fellowship, and for the
332 transaction of business by voting representatives from the congregations.
333

334 31. Regions call regional ministers as their spiritual and administrative leaders serving as
335 the chief executive officers of the regions. Each region develops stated processes for
336 nominating and electing its regional minister, including procedures for seeking counsel from the
337 Office of the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
338 Regions are encouraged to use current Disciples search processes and safeguards, as
339 established by the General Board so that all qualified ministers might be considered. Regions
340 employ other regional staff as required to meet their responsibilities in mission and nurture and
341 so the whole church's commitment to be a pro-reconciling/anti-racism body can be fully honored
342 in each region.
343

344 32. Regions are represented in the General Assembly as provided in paragraph ~~3839b~~.
345 Regions may submit items ~~of business~~ for consideration by the General Assembly, filing such
346 items with the General Board through the Office of the General Minister and President ~~at least~~
347 ~~180 days in advance of a meeting of the General Assembly~~. Regions will receive from the Office
348 of the General Minister and President notification of a General Assembly meeting and a copy of
349 ~~all items of business~~ to be considered by the General Assembly at least 60 days in advance ~~of~~
350 ~~the opening of the Assembly~~.
351

352 33. ~~Regions are responsible for electing members to the General Board as provided in~~
353 ~~paragraph 56b: Each region elects from that region one member of the General Board. In~~

354 ~~addition, the regional minister shall be a member ex officio, without vote, of the General~~
355 ~~Board. In the selection of the General Board, as provided in paragraph 56, regions may submit,~~
356 ~~in consultation with the regional minister, Regional ministers will provide advice and counsel to~~
357 ~~the General Nominating Committee when the Nominating Committee is selecting names of~~
358 ~~persons for possible membership on the General Board.~~

359
360 34. In the selection of the General Nominating Committee, as provided in paragraph ~~7981,~~
361 regions may submit to the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee ~~of the General Board each~~
362 ~~biennium~~ names of persons for possible membership on the General Nominating Committee.

363
364 35. As provided in paragraph ~~6555,~~ the budgetary procedures for financing the various
365 regions, general ministries, and institutions of higher education shall have regular review and
366 evaluation by the ~~Administrative-Committee~~ General Board.

367
368 36. Where other procedures have not been provided by the General Assembly or General
369 Board, matters of grievance and appeal may be referred by regions through the General
370 Minister and President to the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General Board, as
371 provided in paragraph ~~6664e~~.

372 373 374 375 **THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

376
377 37. The general ~~representative-covenantal~~ body of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
378 shall be the General Assembly. In all of its worship, deliberation, and ministries, the General
379 Assembly shall seek to manifest the wholeness and unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of
380 Christ) within the one Body of Christ.

381 NATURE AND PURPOSE

382
383
384 38. The General Assembly, whenever and however it meets, shall gather for worship,
385 education, dialogue, relationship building and when necessary, the transaction of business. The
386 General Assembly is in perpetual existence and can hold meetings digitally and in-person.

387 MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

388
389
390 ~~3839.~~ All members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who register for the General
391 Assembly shall have all privileges of the Assembly, except that voting privileges shall be limited
392 to the following:

393
394 a. *Voting representatives from congregations.* Each congregation of the Christian
395 Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be entitled to have ~~two-three~~ voting representatives,
396 ~~plus one additional voting representative for each 100 participating members, or major~~
397 ~~fraction thereof, over the first 100.~~ These voting representatives from congregations shall
398 be in addition to persons holding standing in the Order of Ministry.

399
400 b. *Voting representatives from regions.* Each region shall be entitled to ~~have a minimum~~
401 ~~of three voting representatives, for the first 1,000 members, as stated in the most recent~~
402 ~~Yearbook. In addition, each region may have an additional representative for each 1,000~~
403 ~~participating members, or major fraction thereof, within the region.~~ These voting
404 representatives from regions shall be in addition to persons holding standing in the

405 Order of Ministry. ~~The voting representatives from each region shall include women and~~
406 ~~men, persons of varied racial or ethnic backgrounds, young adults ages 18 to 30, and~~
407 ~~youth under the age of 18.~~

408
409 c. *Ministers.* Persons holding standing in the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church
410 (Disciples of Christ), in accordance with the policies and criteria established by the
411 General Assembly through its General Commission on Ministry.

412
413 d. *Exceptions.* Members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) not otherwise
414 voting members, who are the chief administrative officers of institutions of higher
415 education and general ministries that are recognized by the General Assembly;
416 members of the General Board not otherwise voting members; and former Moderators
417 and Vice Moderators not otherwise voting members.

418
419 3940. Voting members of the General Assembly, who are representatives from congregations
420 and regions, shall serve ~~from the beginning of one General Assembly to the beginning of the~~
421 next General Assembly a three-year term with one representative being selected by the
422 congregation and/or region each year. Terms begin January 1st of each year. No person shall
423 have more than one vote in the General Assembly, and no person shall vote *in absentia* or by
424 proxy. Congregations and regions may name alternates to replace voting representatives
425 ~~provided for by paragraphs 38(a) and 39(b)~~ who are unable to attend.

426
427 4041. Members of churches ecumenically or historically related to the Christian Church
428 (Disciples of Christ), upon invitation of the Chair, may have the privileges of the floor of the
429 General Assembly, except the vote.

430 431 GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

432
433 4142. The General Assembly ~~shall will:~~ plan and conduct Assembly programs for worship;
434 provide education of its members;engage in dialogue, formation, discernment and prayer on
435 matters of social witness and other matters deemed essential to the witness and ministry of the
436 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); ~~and transaction of business;~~ receive and act upon
437 proposed policy and program, reports and resolutions, and other items of business duly referred
438 to it as hereinafter provided; The business agenda for the in-person Assembly held every three
439 years will include: election of officers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); election of the
440 General Board members; election of the General Nominating Committee; and operational,
441 policy and/or organizational business forwarded by the General Board for action including but
442 not limited to the following: for which it is responsible; make provision and approve procedures
443 for the financial support of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including its regions,
444 general ministries, and institutions of higher education; be a place of accountability for the
445 church's work toward racial justice and inclusion; determine-determining the basis of
446 cooperative relationships of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with other religious
447 bodies, organizations, and agencies; being responsible for authorizing unity and union
448 conversations, consultations, and negotiations with other Christian communions; and
449 maintaining appropriate national ecumenical relationships in both Canada and the United
450 States.

451
452 43. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada, which is related to the General
453 Assembly both through congregations and through the All-Canada Committee, shall be
454 responsible for matters pertaining to the ecumenical and Christian unity concerns of national

455 bodies in Canada, and may take the initiative in relating itself to any and all Canadian and world
456 ecumenical bodies.

457
458 ~~4244. Regular meetings of the General Assembly shall be held every second year at a time
459 and place to be fixed by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the General Board.
460 The General Board shall maintain an appropriate process for making such a recommendation.
461 Under extraordinary circumstances the General Board may call special meetings of the General
462 Assembly. The General Assembly will meet at least one time every calendar year. These
463 meetings will be held digitally. Every third year a meeting will be held in-person. The in-person
464 meeting will be held at a time and place fixed by the General Board. Participants (voting and
465 non-voting) can attend the business sessions of the in-person meeting digitally or in-person.~~

466
467 ~~4345.~~ The General Assembly shall have such committees as it may deem necessary, including
468 Committee on Reference and Counsel, which shall serve as the business committee during the
469 General Assembly and Assembly Program and Arrangements Committee. Committee
470 membership where the election procedures are not further defined by *The Design* or the Special
471 Rules of the General Assembly shall be elected by ~~and report to the Administrative Committee~~
472 ~~and reported to~~ the General Board.

473
474 ~~4446.~~ All items of business to be considered by the General Assembly, ~~except in cases of~~
475 ~~emergency,~~ shall be received by or originate with the General Board. Items of business may be
476 filed with the General Board by any congregation, region, institution of higher education, general
477 ministry, or organization with recognized relationships with the general expression of the
478 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), or by the governing board of any such body. Such items
479 of business ~~must shall~~ be filed through the office of the General Minister and President ~~at least~~
480 ~~180 days in advance of a meeting of the General Assembly in order to allow sufficient time for~~
481 ~~the General Board to review and refer them with appropriate recommendations to the General~~
482 ~~Assembly.~~ All items of business shall be ~~circulated made available~~ among the congregations,
483 regions, and general ministries by the Office of the General Minister and President at least 60
484 days in advance of the General Assembly meeting.

485
486 ~~45.—An item of business may be considered an emergency item if its content is of such~~
487 ~~nature that it could not have been regularly filed 180 days prior to the Assembly. Such items of~~
488 ~~business may be filed with the General Minister and President when submitted by 10 or more~~
489 ~~voting members of the General Assembly from not fewer than five congregations. The General~~
490 ~~Minister and President will see that the items get to the Committee on Reference and Counsel,~~
491 ~~which shall decide whether such items are emergencies and, if so, make appropriate~~
492 ~~recommendations to the General Assembly as to their disposition.~~

493
494 ~~4647.~~ A quorum for the transaction of business by the General Assembly shall be the voting
495 members present and voting at each business session of the Assembly.

496
497
498

499 OFFICERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

500
501 ~~4748.~~ The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall have two kinds of officers: non-salaried
502 officers of the General Assembly and salaried general officers of the Christian Church (Disciples
503 of Christ).

504

505 **4849.** *Non-salaried officers of the General Assembly.* The non-salaried officers of the General
506 Assembly shall be a Moderator, a Moderator-Elect, a First Vice Moderator, a Second Vice
507 Moderator, and such other officers as the General Assembly may from time to time determine.
508 These officers shall be nominated by the General Nominating Committee and elected by the
509 General Assembly for terms of two-three years, unless otherwise noted.

511 a. The Moderator shall preside at the sessions of the General Assembly, the General
512 Board, and the Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board, and shall
513 assume such other responsibilities as may be assigned by these bodies.

514
515 b. The Vice Moderators shall assist the Moderator in presiding at the sessions of the
516 General Assembly, the General Board, and the Administrative-Executive Committee of
517 the General Board, and shall assume such other responsibilities as may be assigned by
518 these bodies.

519
520 c. The Moderator-Elect shall serve for two-three years and then serve as Moderator for
521 two-three years. The Moderator-Elect shall assume other responsibilities as may be
522 assigned by the General Board or Administrative-Executive Committee of the General
523 Board.

524
525 d. The Moderator, Vice Moderators and Moderator-Elect shall be active members of the
526 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and shall include ~~at least one woman, one man, at~~
527 ~~least~~ one lay leader and one minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of
528 Christ), with a commitment to gender diversity and representation. ~~The moderators and~~
529 shall include persons from different racial or ethnic backgrounds. These officers shall
530 take office upon the adjournment of the regular in-person meeting of the General
531 Assembly in which they are elected, and shall hold office ~~through the next regular~~
532 ~~meeting or~~ until their successors have been elected and installed.

533
534 e. A Parliamentarian shall be appointed by the Moderator with the approval of the
535 Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board. The Parliamentarian shall
536 serve during the business sessions of the General Assembly, the General Board, and
537 the Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board, advising on parliamentary
538 questions that may arise. Unless otherwise provided, all proceedings shall be governed
539 by *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.

540
541 **4950.** *Salaried officers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).* The salaried officers of the
542 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be a General Minister and President, a Secretary, a
543 Treasurer, and such other officers as the General Assembly may from time to time determine.
544 The Secretary and Treasurer shall be designated from the Office of the General Minister and
545 President. The Secretary shall keep the record of the proceedings of the General Assembly, the
546 General Board, and the Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board; shall serve
547 as the Corporation Secretary as may be required by law; and shall perform such other duties as
548 may be assigned to this office. The Treasurer shall be the Corporation Financial Officer and
549 shall perform such duties as may be assigned to this office. The Secretary and the Treasurer
550 shall be elected by the Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board on nomination
551 by the General Minister and President for terms of two-three years and may be re-elected.

552
553 **5051.** The General Minister and President shall be recognized as pastor to the Christian
554 Church (Disciples of Christ) and president of the organization.

555

556 ~~5452~~. As pastor to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the roles for the General Minister
557 and President are to:

- 558
- 559 a. Provide spiritual leadership to the church in all of its diverse manifestations and
560 exercise pastoral authority over concerns of the church in times of crisis.
- 561
- 562 b. Embody the spirit of *The Design*.
- 563
- 564 c. Articulate and interpret *The Design*.
- 565
- 566 d. Serve as the primary ecumenical representative for the Christian Church (Disciples of
567 Christ).
- 568
- 569 e. Lead and give oversight to the continual discernment of God's vision for the Christian
570 Church (Disciples of Christ),
- 571
- 572 f. Give oversight to mutual accountability among all expressions of the church.
- 573
- 574 g. Represent the whole church in collegial leadership in gatherings of regional, general,
575 and congregational ministries.
- 576
- 577 h. Offer advice and counsel to commissions, committees, and task groups of General
578 Board and regional bodies.
- 579
- 580 i. Convene various congregational, regional, educational, and general church executives
581 and pastors for dialogue and reflection on the whole life of the Christian Church
582 (Disciples of Christ).
- 583

584 ~~5253~~. As chief executive officer of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the presidential
585 roles of the General Minister and President are to:

- 586
- 587 a. Have full access to boards of general ministries, ~~racial-ethnic ministries including~~
588 ~~National Convocation, North American Pacific/-Asian Disciples and the Central Pastoral~~
589 ~~Office foref Hispanic Ministries,~~ and regions with voice and vote, as appropriate.
- 590
- 591 b. Hold fiduciary responsibility for the Office of the General Minister and President's
592 finances.
- 593
- 594 c. Give oversight of Office of General Minister and President in all of its functions.
- 595
- 596 d. Serve as primary spokesperson for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- 597
- 598 e. Sign official documents of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- 599
- 600 f. Serve as corporate Resident Agent for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- 601
- 602 g. Designate Office of General Minister and President executive staff to serve in
603 representative capacities, as appropriate.
- 604
- 605

606 ~~5354~~. Qualifications and accountability for the General Minister and President are:

- 607
608 a. The General Minister and President shall be an ordained minister with standing in the
609 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
610
611 b. The General Minister and President shall be elected and called to this ministry by the
612 General Assembly upon nomination by the Administrative-Executive Committee of the
613 General Board through the General Board, for a term of six years and may be elected to
614 one additional term.
615
616 c. The General Minister and President is accountable to the Administrative-Executive
617 Committee of the General Board, General Board, and General Assembly.
618
619 d. The General Minister and President may be removed from office by a two-thirds
620 majority vote of the General Board upon recommendation of the Administrative
621 Executive Committee of the General Board.
622
623 e. In the nomination and election of the General Minister and President, a two-thirds vote
624 of those present and voting in each of the Administrative-Executive Committee of the
625 General Board, the General Board, and the General Assembly shall be required. In the
626 event of a vacancy in the position of General Minister and President, the Administrative
627 Executive Committee of the General Board shall name the person to fill the vacancy until
628 the next in-person General Assembly.
629

630 THE GENERAL BOARD

631
632 5455. The General Assembly shall establish and elect a smaller deliberative body governance
633 board responsible to the General Assembly that shall be called the General Board. Under broad
634 policies determined by the General Assembly, the The General Board is called to be in
635 covenantal relationship with the whole church as connective tissue in doing its worshipful work
636 and will manage its work in at least these three committees: Mission, Finance and Executive.
637 The General Board shall:

- 638
639 a. Receive topics/issues for dialogue and education from the Church and establish the
640 agenda for, review, and refer to the General Assembly meetings. with appropriate
641 recommendations all items of business presented, as provided in paragraph 41.
642
643 b. Establish the procedures for the Church to dialogue about topics/issues of interest to
644 the church and society including education on the topic/issue and ways to take action.
645 whereby the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may engage in planning its total
646 program of work and witness.
647
648 c. Establish mission priorities after dialogue, formation, discernment and prayer of the
649 General Assembly.
650
651 d. Take action on matters of social witness after dialogue, formation, discernment and
652 prayer of the General Assembly.

653
654
655 Receive, review, and approve the financial objective of the Christian Church (Disciples of
656 Christ).
657

658 ~~de. Coordinate, Review~~ review and evaluate the ~~program-work~~ program-work of the Christian Church
659 (Disciples of Christ) in accordance with its recognized mission, including general
660 ministry, regional ministry and other ministries, and enact structural reform when
661 necessary and make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly.

662
663 ~~ef. Receive and initiate proposed policy to be referred with recommendation to the~~
664 ~~General Assembly for action~~ Establish policies as needed.

665
666 ~~fg. Establish procedures for~~ review of the Design and all Special and Standing Rules at a
667 minimum of every three years and make recommendations for changes, continual
668 renewal and structural reform.

669
670 ~~gh. Create and establish the church--wide mission funding system and review and~~
671 ~~evaluate the program for effectiveness at a minimum of every three years and make~~
672 ~~recommendations for changes as appropriate. Consult and confer with staff members in~~
673 ~~consideration of matters under review and evaluation.~~

674
675
676 ~~hj. Receive, review, approve and give oversight, advice and counsel to the financial~~
677 ~~program status of the ministry organizations of the Church. Create procedures to~~
678 ~~allocate and reallocate funds based on mission priorities.~~

679
680 ~~il. Elect or confirm the governing bodies of general ministries for which it is responsible.~~

681
682 ~~i. Elect the committees of the General Assembly.~~

683
684 ~~k. Recognize, Following election, recognition by the Christian Church (Disciples of~~
685 ~~Christ) shall be bestowed upon a new Administrative Officer by the General Board in an~~
686 ~~appropriate act (elect, confirm, affirm) based on the governing documents of the General~~
687 ~~Ministry, following election.~~

688
689 ~~l. Approve regional boundary changes (even if only one (1) congregation is involved)~~
690 ~~once all parties involved have participated and approved (congregations and regions~~
691 ~~impacted).~~

692
693 ~~m. Act on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to maintain 501 (c) (3) tax~~
694 ~~status with the Internal Revenue Service on behalf of the General Assembly,~~
695 ~~congregations, regional ministries and general ministries in good standing with the~~
696 ~~Church. Upon dissolution of any organization under this section, assets shall be~~
697 ~~distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of~~
698 ~~the Internal Revenue Code.~~

699
700 ~~n. Set time, place and format of General Assembly meetings.~~

701
702 ~~o. Take action on policies and procedures of the General Assembly when timely action is~~
703 ~~needed between assemblies.~~

704
705 ~~jp. Assume and discharge such other responsibilities as may be assigned to it by the~~
706 ~~General Assembly.~~

707

708 g. Fill vacancies in offices elected by the General Assembly, subject to ratification by the
709 General Assembly.

710
711 r. Have an Executive Committee which will serve as the Board of the Office of
712 General Minister and President.

713
714 s. Where other procedures have not been provided by the General Assembly, matters of
715 grievance and appeal may be referred by congregations, individual members of
716 congregations, and regions through the Office of General Minister to the Executive
717 Committee of the General Board for final decision.

718
719 ~~55. Between meetings of the General Assembly, the General Board may take interim action~~
720 ~~within established policy of the General Assembly on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples~~
721 ~~of Christ), subject in all matters to a review of its action by the subsequent General Assembly.~~
722

723 56. The General Board shall consist of members elected for terms of ~~four~~ six years. Such
724 elected members shall include ~~laymen, laywomen, laity,~~ and ministers with standing in the
725 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), not more than one-half nor less than one-third of whom
726 shall be ministers. They shall be elected in the following manner:

727
728 a. The General Nominating Committee shall nominate, with attention to the full
729 diversity of the church, and the General Assembly shall elect ~~17 members~~
730 ~~representing congregations, at least two of whom are between the ages of 18 and~~
731 ~~23 at the time of election~~ one (1) member from each region and one (1) member from the
732 current or former membership of each general ministries' board, including boards of National
733 Convocation, North American Pacific/Asian Disciples, and Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic
734 Ministries.

735 b. The General Nominating Committee shall nominate, and the General Assembly shall
736 elect two (2) members from ecumenical partners, one (1) representative from each full
737 communion partner. The governing body of each Region shall elect one of its members to serve
738 on the
739 General Board.

740 c. The governing body of each General Ministry shall elect one of its members to
741 serve on the General Board. Two (2) members ex-officio, one (1) from seminaries and
742 one (1) from colleges and universities. These members will be selected by the Council on
743 Theological Education and Council of College and University Presidents respectively.

744 d. The governing bodies of the National Bi-Lingual Hispanic Fellowship, North
745 American Pacific/Asian Disciples and the National Convocation shall each elect
746 one of its members to serve on the General Board. The officers ex-officio: Moderator,
747 First Vice Moderator, Second Vice Moderator, the Moderator-elect and the General Minister and
748 President.

749 e. Each regional minister will serve ex-officio without vote.

750 f. The chief administrative officer of each general ministry will serve ex-officio without
751 vote.

752 g. Three (3) members ex-officio without vote: Corporate Secretary, Corporate Treasurer
753 and Parliamentarian.

754
755 The following shall be members ex officio: the Moderators; General Minister and
756 President; two ecumenical members, each from a different North American communion;
757 and the former General Minister and Presidents. The following shall be members ex
758 officio without vote: the Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, the Chief Administrative

759 ~~Officer of each general ministry; each regional minister; two Chief Administrative~~
760 ~~Officers of institutions of higher education designated by Higher Education and~~
761 ~~Leadership Ministries as representatives of liberal arts education and seminary~~
762 ~~education.~~

763
764 57. Terms on the General Board begin ~~and end~~ at the close of the in-person General
765 Assembly where the member is elected, and the member serves until their successor has been
766 elected. Each member serves one (1) six-year term. One-half of the Board membership is
767 elected at each in-person General Assembly. The moderator-elect is elected to one (1) three
768 (3) year term in that role and then serves one (1) term of three (3) years as moderator. The
769 General Minister and President may be elected to two (2) six (6) year terms. The other elected
770 officers serve one (1) three (3) year term. Elected members of the General Board who have
771 served two full consecutive
772 terms shall not be eligible for re-election until ~~one biennium~~three years ~~has~~have elapsed.

773
774 58. Ex-officio members are on the General Board due to their roles. If they no longer serve
775 in the role from which they were elected, their position on the General Board becomes vacant.

776
777 59. The General Nominating Committee will seek advice and counsel from regional
778 ministers and general ministry presidents~~chief administrative officers~~ when nominating General
779 Board members. Nominees are to be involved members of congregations and regional and/or
780 general ministry life. Nominees will be sought with specific gifts of mission, finance, and/or
781 governance and the full diversity of the Church will be considered.

782
783 60. Vacancies shall be filled by the General Board upon recommendation of the Executive
784 Committee of the General Board.

785
786 61. Regular meetings of the General Board shall ~~ordinarily~~ be held at least twice annually at
787 a time, and place ~~and format~~ to be fixed by the General Board, ~~except that the meeting in the~~
788 ~~year in which the~~
789 ~~General Assembly shall convene shall be held not more than 90 days nor less than 60 days~~
790 ~~prior to the beginning of the regular meeting of the General Assembly. Meetings will be held~~
791 ~~digitally or in-person. When an in-person meeting is held, members can also participate and~~
792 ~~vote digitally.~~ One-half of the voting membership of the General Board shall constitute a
793 quorum. ~~The meeting of the full General Board in a year in which a General Assembly is not~~
794 ~~held may be canceled by majority vote of the General Board, being secured by mail ballot,~~
795 ~~online form, or other appropriate communication means by which a reply can be verified.~~ The
796 Moderator may call special meetings of the General Board under extraordinary circumstances.
797

798
799
800 ~~5962.~~ In addition to the Mission, Finance and Executive committees, ~~T~~the General Board ~~shall~~
801 ~~may~~ appoint committees as necessary to facilitate the work of the General Board. General
802 Board committees, when used, will be assigned to reinforce the wholeness of the General
803 Board's job and so as never to interfere with interaction between the General Board and its
804 constituencies.

805
806 a. General Board committees ordinarily will assist the board by preparing policy
807 alternatives and implications for board deliberation.

808
809 b. General Board committees may not speak or act for the General Board except

when formally given such authority for specific and time-limited purposes.

e.

63. The General Board shall maintain Standing Rules that guide and govern its work as assigned in *The Design*.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL BOARD

64. The General Board shall establish an Executive Committee of the General Board. The Executive Committee shall serve as Executive Committee of the General Board and the Board of the Office of General Minister and President.

The Executive Committee of the General Board shall:

- a. Implement policies and actions of the General Board.
- b. Fulfill duties and functions assigned to it by the General Board.
- c. Prepare the business agenda for the meetings of the General Assembly and the General Board.
- d. Appoint committees not otherwise provided for.
- e. Where other procedures have not been provided by the General Assembly or the General Board, matters of grievance and appeal may be referred by individual members, ministers, congregations, regions, or general ministries to the Executive Committee for final decision.

The Board of the Office of the General Minister and President shall:

- f. Approve the budget and policies for the Office of General Minister and President and other organizations that relate to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through the Office of General Minister and President.
- g. Provide guidance and oversight to the General Minister and President.
- a-h. Handle grievances filed against the General Minister and President.

6065. There shall be an ~~The Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General board shall be elected by the General Board from the membership of the General Board. This ~~Administrative Executive~~ Committee shall consist of twenty-one (21) persons; ~~;- nine~~ 9 members from the voting membership of the General Board; nine (9) 5-members as *ex-officio* (The General Minister and President; the Moderator; the Moderator-elect; and the two (2) Vice Moderators of the General Assembly); two (2) regional ministers, ex-officio without vote, and two (2) general ministry presidents chief administrative officers, ex-officio without vote; and ~~7-three (3)~~ three (3) members as *ex-officio* without vote (the Corporate Secretary, Corporate Treasurer, and Parliamentarian of the General Assembly); ~~;- 2 representative from the Council of General Ministries; and 2 representative from the College of Regional Ministers.)~~ ;

6166. ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General Board members shall be elected to a term of ~~two-three (3)~~ three (3) years, beginning at the first meeting of the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General Board following their election to the position. A member may be elected to one ~~consecutive-additional~~ term to the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General Board, but not to extend beyond the member's service on the General Board. Members of the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General Board who have served two full consecutive terms shall not be eligible for re-election until ~~one biennium has~~ three years have elapsed.

860 ~~6267.~~ The Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board shall meet at least two
861 times each year and shall be organized to carry out its work in committees and to implement
862 policies and actions of the General Board,

863
864 ~~serve as the board of directors for the Office of General Minister and President, and handle~~
865 ~~grievances filed against the General Minister and President, and shall assume and discharge~~
866 ~~such other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned to it by the General Board. The~~
867 ~~officers of the General Assembly, in consultation with the General Minister and President, shall~~
868 ~~have the authority to cancel one meeting of the Administrative Committee in any year in which~~
869 ~~there is not a General Assembly. Specific reason for the cancellation shall be furnished to the~~
870 ~~members of the Administrative Committee, and a unanimous affirmative vote of the~~
871 ~~Administrative Committee shall be secured by mail ballot, online form, or other verifiable means~~
872 ~~of communication as required by Indiana law. The Administrative-Executive Committee of the~~
873 General Board may call on additional members of the General Board, and others as it deems
874 necessary, to serve on subcommittees and task forces needed to accomplish its work.

875
876 ~~63.— The Administrative Committee shall provide for long-range planning for the work of the~~
877 ~~Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and shall forward all resulting proposals for review and~~
878 ~~evaluation by the General Board and disposition by the General Assembly. It shall promote and~~
879 ~~coordinate the activities of the several general ministries to assure that such actions conform to~~
880 ~~the policies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).~~

881
882 ~~64.— The Administrative Committee shall fill vacancies in offices elected by the General~~
883 ~~Assembly, subject to ratification by the General Assembly at its next regular meeting. It shall~~
884 ~~submit to the General Assembly through the General Board any recommendations it may deem~~
885 ~~useful for the development of the effectiveness and efficiency of the life, mission, work, and~~
886 ~~organization of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).~~

887
888 ~~65.— The Administrative Committee shall be responsible for regular review and evaluation of~~
889 ~~the budgetary and promotional procedures for financing the various regions, general ministries,~~
890 ~~and institutions of higher education of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The~~
891 ~~Administrative Committee shall act on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to~~
892 ~~maintain 501(c)(3) tax status with the Internal Revenue Service on behalf of the General~~
893 ~~Assembly, congregations, regional ministries, and general ministries in good standing with the~~
894 ~~Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Upon the dissolution of any organization under this~~
895 ~~section, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of~~
896 ~~Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.~~

897
898 ~~66.— The Administrative Committee shall prepare the business agenda for the meetings of the~~
899 ~~General Assembly and the General Board, and appoint committees not otherwise provided for.~~
900 ~~Where other procedures have not been provided by the General Assembly or General Board,~~
901 ~~matters of grievance and appeal may be referred by individual members, ministers,~~
902 ~~congregations, regions, or general ministries to the Administrative Committee for final decision.~~

903
904 ~~67-68~~ Two-thirds of the voting members of the Administrative-Executive Committee of the
905 General Board shall constitute a quorum.

906 **GENERAL MINISTRIES**

907
908
909 ~~6869.~~ The General Assembly, upon recommendation of the General Board, shall establish or
910 recognize general ministries for broad areas of work, central administrative functions, and

911 specialized study and service to meet responsibilities of the Christian Church (Disciples of
912 Christ) in its mission of witness and service to the world. It is an imperative of the Christian
913 Church (Disciples of Christ) that general ministries are created to strengthen congregational life
914 for the church's mission.

915
916 ~~6970.~~ The National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National
917 Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship ~~National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship Central Pastoral~~
918 ~~Office for Hispanic Ministries~~ and the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples witness to the
919 diversity within the church. These ministries, with their unique historical relationships within the
920 Christian Church and the rich cultural gifts they share, are empowered to speak to particular
921 cultural contexts within the ecclesial needs of Disciples in the United States and Canada and
922 are charged with the development of their particular ministries.

923
924 These ministries make reports and are represented in places where general ministries are
925 called upon to serve the life of the church through reports and representation. Their executive
926 ministers shall serve in partnership and collaboration with regional ministers and other
927 leadership groups throughout the church.

928
929 ~~7071.~~ The General Board shall approve the purpose and function of each general ministry and
930 shall elect or confirm the members of the governing body of each. The responsibilities, manner
931 of selection, and tenure of office for the members of the governing body of a general ministry
932 shall be determined with reference to its purpose and function and shall be specified in its
933 bylaws or rules of procedure, which shall be filed with the Office of General Minister and
934 President.

935
936 ~~7472.~~ Each general ministry shall select its officers and staff using the current Disciples search
937 processes, as established by the General Board. Each board shall be called upon to enter into
938 an agreement with the General Board or to include in its bylaws or rules of procedure a
939 provision for any new chief administrative officer to be elected by its board following consultation
940 with the General Minister and President, as provided for in paragraph ~~5255~~, and with the advice
941 and counsel of the Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board. Following
942 election, recognition by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be bestowed upon a new
943 Chief Administrative Officer by the General Board in an appropriate act.

944
945 ~~7273.~~ A general ministry may be incorporated and shall administer its program and financial
946 affairs and establish or retain its bylaws or rules of procedure in accordance with provisions
947 established by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through the General Assembly.

948
949 ~~7374.~~ Each general ministry shall facilitate policy decisions of the Christian Church (Disciples
950 of Christ), accounting for its work through regular reports of its plans and actions to the General
951 Board, ~~which shall refer them to the General Assembly with recommendations for appropriate~~
952 ~~action. General ministries shall provide interim summary reports to the Administrative~~
953 ~~Committee to enable it to exercise its responsibility for promoting and coordinating the activities~~
954 ~~of the several general ministries to assure that such actions conform to the policies of the~~
955 ~~Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).~~

956 957 **RECOGNIZED MINISTRY PARTNERS**

958
959 ~~7475.~~ The Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board may recommend to the
960 General Board relationships of
961 ministry partners and other organizations whose mission and ministry support the overall
962 mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The General Assembly, as coordinated by

963 the Office of the General Minister and President and the Ministry Partner's sponsor(s), shall
964 appropriately celebrate newly recognized ministry partners.

965
966 ~~7576~~. A ministry desiring such recognition shall request such a relationship through an
967 appropriate general ministry. Each General Ministry shall establish evaluation criteria for
968 recommending ministry partners to the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General
969 Board, but shall include at a
970 minimum action by the General Ministry's governing board.

971
972 ~~7677~~. The ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General Board shall maintain the criteria
973 by which Ministry Partners are
974 evaluated for recognition beyond the process of a sponsoring General Ministry.

975
976 ~~7778~~. The plans and activities of such an organization will be reported to the General Board
977 through the sponsoring general ministry. A review of such reports and the action of the General
978 Board shall be included in the report of the General Board to the General Assembly. Ministry
979 partners failing to report for three consecutive board meetings will be removed from status as a
980 Recognized Ministry Partner.

981
982 ~~7879~~. The contact information for the ministry partners shall be listed with the sponsoring
983 ministry ~~of in~~ the Year Book and Directory.

984
985
986

987 CONTINUAL RENEWAL AND STRUCTURAL REFORM

988
989 ~~7980~~. The General Board shall maintain procedures for continual renewal and structural reform
990 under policies approved by the General Assembly, taking into account implications for racial and
991 ethnic congregations and clergy. To further the process, existing general ministries may be
992 called upon to reassign staff, budget, and functions for this purpose. In any inter-unit
993 adjustment, as well as in development of any new general ministries of the Christian Church
994 (Disciples of Christ), existing organizations remain intact, subject to modification by mutual
995 consent of the organizations involved in light of the corporate judgment of the Christian Church
996 (Disciples of Christ) as expressed through the General Assembly. Full protection shall be given
997 to all legal and contractual relationships, including trust funds and pension funds.

998
999

1000 NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

1001 ~~8081~~. There shall be a General Nominating Committee consisting of ten (10)-members elected
1002 by the General Assembly. The General Nominating Committee shall be widely representative by
1003 gender, age race and ethnicity, and not more than one member shall be from any one region
1004 except as may be necessary to ensure representation from National Convocation, ~~National~~
1005 ~~Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship~~ Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries, North
1006 American Pacific/-Asian Disciples and other such ministries that may be recommended by the
1007 General Board and recognized by the General Assembly. One-half of the members at the time
1008 of their election shall be from the membership of the General Board, and not more than one-half
1009 nor less than one-third shall be ministers. Each ~~biennium-triennium~~ the ~~Administrative-Executive~~
1010 Committee of the General Board shall nominate five persons for election by the General
1011 Assembly to a term of ~~four-six (6)~~ six (6) years on the General Nominating Committee. A member of
1012 the General Nominating Committee may serve only one full term.

1013

1014 ~~8482~~. The General Nominating Committee shall accept suggestions from throughout the
1015 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and shall maintain records of suggested nominees and
1016 their qualifications. When selecting candidates for offices, the General Nominating Committee
1017 shall consider, but not be limited to, all names suggested.

1018
1019 ~~8283~~. The General Nominating Committee shall select one nominee for each of the following
1020 offices to be elected by the General Assembly: Moderator, First Vice Moderator, Second Vice
1021 Moderator, Moderator-Elect and members of the General Board whose election is vested in the
1022 General Assembly, as provided in paragraph ~~4142~~.

1023
1024 ~~8384~~. The report of the General Nominating Committee on these nominations shall be sent to
1025 the congregations and regions at least 60 days prior to the meeting of the General Assembly
1026 where the election will be held. Provision shall be made for nominations from the floor of the
1027 General Assembly. A simple majority is needed for approval.

1028
1029 ~~8485~~. The General Nominating Committee also shall present to the General Board the
1030 nominees for positions whose election or confirmation is vested in the General Board, as
1031 provided in paragraphs ~~4155 and 65~~, including the members of the governing bodies of the
1032 various general ministries, members of the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General
1033 Board, and members of committees and
1034 commissions, noting terms of service and status (elected, *ex-officio*, *ex-officio* without vote,
1035 etc.). The Office of the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of
1036 Christ) shall provide staff and counsel for the General Nominating Committee.

1037
1038
1039

1040
1041 **MINISTRY**

1042
1043 ~~8586~~. The fundamental ministry within the church is that of Jesus Christ. ~~He~~ God calls ~~His-the~~
1044 church to participate in ~~His-Jesus'~~ ministry.

1045
1046 ~~8687~~. By virtue of baptism in the church, every Christian enters into the corporate ministry of
1047 God's people. Within the corporate ministry, each Christian fulfills ~~her or his~~ their own calling as
1048 a servant of Christ sent into the world to minister. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
1049 shall seek to provide all of its members with opportunities to exercise this ministry.

1050
1051 ~~8788~~. In addition, the church recognizes an order of ministry, set apart under God, to equip the
1052 whole people to fulfill their corporate ministry. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),
1053 through the General Assembly, shall approve general policies and criteria for the order of the
1054 ministries, within policies developed by the General Assembly; regions certify the standing of
1055 ministers and provide help, counsel, and pastoral care to ministers and congregations.

1056
1057 ~~8889~~. The offices of elder and deacon are ordered by the congregations, through election and
1058 recognition with appropriate ceremony, for the performance of certain functions of ministry
1059 appropriate to the offices.

1060
1061 a. A person elected elder is authorized to exercise within the congregation which elects
1062 ~~her or him~~ them the ministerial functions it assigns for periods of time which it specifies,
1063 such as sharing in the ministration of baptism and the Lord's Supper and the conduct of
1064 worship, and sharing in the pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the congregation.
1065 The eldership is a voluntary ministry, each congregation having a plurality of elders.

1066
1067 b. A person elected deacon is authorized to serve in the congregation which elects ~~her~~
1068 ~~or him~~them for periods of time which it specifies by assisting in the ministration of
1069 baptism and the Lord's Supper, in the conduct of worship, and in the pastoral care and
1070 spiritual leadership of the congregation. The diaconate is a voluntary ministry.
1071

1072 REVISION AND AMENDMENTS

1073
1074 ~~8990.~~ Revisions and amendments to this *Design* may be made by a two-thirds vote of ~~the~~
1075 voting members ~~present and voting at of~~ the General Assembly ~~present and voting~~, providing
1076 such revision or amendment shall have been ~~regularly filed 180 days in advance of the~~
1077 ~~meetings of the General Assembly and~~ circulated among the congregations and regions 60
1078 days in advance of the General Assembly where the vote will be taken.
1079

1080 ASCRIPTION

1081
1082 Now to God, who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that
1083 we ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever
1084 and ever. Amen
1085

1086 — Ephesians 3:20-21
1087

1088 i. The general ministries now recognized are:
1089

1090 Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries

1091 Christian Board of Publication

1092 Christian Church Foundation, Inc.

1093 ~~Disciples Church Extension Fund Financial & Missional Resources, Inc.~~

1094 Council on Christian Unity, Inc. dba Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry

1095 Disciples of Christ Historical Society

1096 Disciples Church Extension Fund

1097 Division of Homeland Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Inc. dba

1098 Disciples Home Missions

1099 Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Inc.

1100 Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Inc.

1101 The National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

1102 National Convocation of the Christian Church

1103 North American Pacific/Asian Disciples,

1104 Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
1105

1106 ~~ii. — The racial and ethnic ministries now recognized are:~~
1107

1108 ~~National Convocation of the Christian Church~~

1109 ~~North American Pacific/Asian Disciples, Executive Council~~

1110 ~~Central Pastoral Commission Office for Hispanic Ministries and Hispanic Caucus~~
1111

1112

1113

1114

1115