

Governing Documents Checklist



Constitution

- ✓ Optional preamble describing identity
- ✓ Name of Non-profit/congregation
- ✓ Purpose of the organization
- ✓ Membership of the organization
- ✓ Authority and responsibilities of the congregation
- ✓ Scope of authority of the Board and committees
- ✓ How officers are elected overall (not specific mechanics that go in other documents)
- ✓ Congregational meetings in general and scope of topics that go to a congregational meeting with a minimum number of meetings per year but not the date of when it happens so that you are not put in a position of having to move the meeting and therefore violate your constitution.
- ✓ Pastoral staff hiring, releasing from employment, resignation processes and relationship of pastor to board and congregation in broad strokes with details in bylaws.
- ✓ Rules of order to be followed in meetings
- ✓ Indemnification statement for board members
- ✓ Distribution of assets if closure were necessary or if the congregation removed itself from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) affiliation.
- ✓ Amendment and Revision policy for the constitution suggest 3/4 majority to change or higher — helpful to say that the distribution of assets, denominational affiliation, and way to change the constitution can not be revised by any method.
- ✓ Effective date of the document with signature lines of responsible persons as well as a history of documents this document supersedes.

By-Laws

- ✓ Officers: Titles and terms of office as well as the qualifications for officers
- ✓ Make up of the board — name quorum and absentee ballot policy but not how often they meet, quorum must be at or above 1/3 of board membership. Voting by proxy not allowed but can vote if online/phone in real time.
- ✓ Roles of Elders/Trustees/Diaconate NOT how often they meet
- ✓ Overall rules for Congregational Meetings — name quorum and minimum annual meetings
- ✓ Scope of pastoral authority/method of supervision/annual review NOT job descriptions
- ✓ Search process broad strokes including naming the regional church as consultant
- ✓ Completion of a pastorate procedures: sections for resignation/release from employment
- ✓ Basic Committee structure outline but not the nitty gritty details of policies
- ✓ Nominating committee formation and scope of work
- ✓ How to make amendments and revision to the bylaws — suggest 3/4 of quorum of board with notification in writing before consideration.

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Policy Manual

- ✓ Current job descriptions and how staff are evaluated on a regular basis
- ✓ Current long range vision documents or how to do visioning and on what schedule
- ✓ Specific duties of the officers
- ✓ Details on calling of a congregation meeting
- ✓ Details on the meeting schedules
- ✓ Personnel policies — evaluation mechanisms, job descriptions, grievance policy
- ✓ More defined job descriptions for committees
- ✓ How to appoint members to committees as needed between elections
- ✓ Building Use and insurance policy
- ✓ Child Protection policy and processes
- ✓ Policies for minister/elder emeritus
- ✓ Supervision of non-ministerial staff and review policies of staff
- ✓ Standing committees process
- ✓ Investment policies
- ✓ Bequests policy
- ✓ Maternal/paternal leave policy
- ✓ Sabbatical for staff policy
- ✓ All other board approved policy statements
- ✓ Statement about annual or bi-annual review of the policy manual
- ✓ Amendment process — suggest 50+ % of vote during a duly called board meeting with written notice 20-30 days prior
- ✓ Conflict of Interest policy of hiring staff/purchasing services from staff/laity
- ✓ Records retention and review policy

Eight jobs of a non-profit board by law

- ✓ Board makes sure the stated purpose of the organization is accomplished by the staff and resources of the agency/congregation — Board to make sure resources not used for other than purpose of the organization
- ✓ Board Hire and creates supervisory structure for Executive Staff/Pastor
- ✓ Board to be informed on the program life of the agency/congregation
- ✓ Board responsible to see that suitable financial controls are in place
- ✓ Board makes sure reports and taxes are filed with government agencies
- ✓ Board establishes and reviews policies of the agency/congregation on a stated schedule
- ✓ Board is final court of appeals for staffing issues not handled through other process in the policy manual.
- ✓ Board is responsible to keep a permanent book of minutes on file and review minutes for receipt at meetings.