

# 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 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

- √ Specific duties of the officers
- √ Details on calling of a congregation meeting
- ❑ Details on the meeting schedules
- ❑ 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 duly called board meeting with written notice 30 days prior

### 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.