

# South Pasadena Christian Church Constitution & Bylaws

## PREAMBLE

We, the members of South Pasadena Christian Church (SPCC), in order to promote the work of the Church in the spirit of Christ and, thus, advance His Kingdom, do hereby adopt this Constitution & Bylaws. We are a church governed by the membership through the established governing process outlined in this document.

## ARTICLE I

### NAME

The name of this organization shall be South Pasadena Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of South Pasadena, California, incorporated under the laws of the State of California as a religious nonprofit corporation.

## ARTICLE II

### MISSION

To sow and cultivate a life of faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, founded upon the Bible, the Living Word of God, with the love and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

## ARTICLE III

### MEMBERSHIP

#### Section A. Definition & Procedure

1. The membership of this congregation shall consist of baptized persons who meet one of the following:
  - a. Are members of the congregation at the time of the acceptance of this document
  - b. Complete a membership course and unite with it through one of the following procedures:
    - i. The public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior at a worship service
    - ii. The transfer of membership from another Christian church

#### Section B. Termination

1. A member's name may be removed from SPCC membership in either of two ways:
  - a. Upon written or verbal request to the Senior Minister and/or Elders
  - b. Removal by the Elders and Senior Minister for reasons pertaining to a prolonged absence or a danger to the health and mission of SPCC by unanimous vote

## ARTICLE IV

### THE CHURCH BOARD

#### Section A. Authority

1. Regarding the administrative aspects of the Church, all departments, committees, boards, and employees shall be responsible to and report to the Church Board.
2. The Church Board shall regularly report its work to the congregation by posting the Church Board minutes and making them available upon request

3. The Church Board shall abide by the decisions made during business meetings of the congregation.

#### Section B. Meetings

1. The Church Board shall, at least, hold quarterly meetings. These meetings shall be held on the third Sunday of the month beginning in August unless an alternative day of the week is agreed upon by the Church Board at a previous meeting.
2. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson of the Church Board or on the initiative of five (5) members of the Church Board. Such special meetings may be held at any time, provided appropriate notice has been given to each member at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.
3. All Church Board meetings are to run according to the rules outlined in the latest edition of the book, *Robert's Rules of Order*.

#### Section C. Responsibilities

1. To receive reports and proposals from Church membership, departments, committees, boards, and employees, and to act upon proposals with approval, disapproval, modification, or referral back to the respective parties.
  - a. To vote upon a proposal to have persons moved to honorary positions, such as Minister Emeritus, Elder Emeritus, Deacon Emeritus. Such persons are to be approved or disapproved for this life-long position and are relieved of all regular duties of his or her former office once approved.
  - b. To vote upon any other proposals as appropriate.
2. To establish and dissolve committees as may be deemed necessary to accomplish the mission and vision of the Church, and to clearly stipulate the specific purpose, duties, and duration of such committees.
  - a. The Finance and Building & Grounds Committees are permanent committees under the Church Board and may not be dissolved.
3. To fill immediate vacancies of Church Board positions as necessary that may occur between the yearly elections.
4. To approve the dates of all business meetings of the congregation.
5. To vote on the calling of the Senior Minister following the procedures outlined in Article IX, Section B.
6. To vote on the hiring or dismissal of any other Church staff positions, upon the recommendation of the Senior Minister or Elders.
7. To be the legal directors of the corporation as called for in the Articles of Incorporation.
  - a. To act as the legal agents of the Church in all business matters on behalf of the church membership.
    - i. Title to all property of SPCC is vested in the church membership, each member sharing in that ownership.
  - b. All transfers of title, signature or notes, deeds, mortgages and all legal papers of every character to be signed on behalf of the Church shall be signed by the Chairperson of the Church Board, but only after such action has been approved and authorized through four-fifths majority vote by the church membership present at a business meeting of the congregation.
  - c. No contract of purchase or sale of property for the Church shall be binding unless properly approved and authorized by the Church Board, all in accordance with the laws of the State of California.

#### Section D. Membership

1. The Church Board shall be composed of:
  - a. Chairperson of the Church Board
  - b. Vice Chairperson of Board
  - c. Elders
  - d. Deacons
  - e. Church Board Clerk
  - f. Treasurer
  - g. Historian
  - h. Ministers

#### Section E. Voting

1. Only Church Board members, except the Senior Minister and other employed Ministers, have voting privileges at the Church Board meetings.
2. A quorum shall consist of fifty (50) percent plus one (1) of the Church Board membership.
  - a. If a quorum is not present, neither motions nor voting are permitted; however, discussion is encouraged.

### ARTICLE V

#### MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH BOARD

##### Section A. Positions Elected by the Congregation

1. Nomination and Voting
  - a. A candidate for any of the positions in Article V, Section C, must be nominated by the Senior Minister, the Chairperson of the Elders, and the Chairperson of the Deacons. Each candidate must accept his or her nomination.
  - b. During the Annual Congregational Meeting, nominated candidates for Church Board positions are to be voted upon individually through a silent vote by the Church membership present.
    - i. A candidate must receive a seventy-five (75) percent majority vote in order to assume (or be reaffirmed for) the position.
    - ii. If a candidate does not receive a seventy-five (75) percent majority vote, a new candidate must be proposed by all the current Ministers on staff, the Chairperson of the Elders, and the Chairperson of the Deacons at a specially called business meeting of the congregation.
2. Chairperson of the Church Board
  - a. The Chairperson of the Church Board will hold office for a one-year term. The Chairperson may hold office for up to no more than four consecutive one-year terms, but must be reaffirmed by the Church membership every year. After four one-year terms, the Chairperson may not serve again for a period of at least one year.
  - b. Duties and Responsibilities:
    - i. Chairs all meetings of the Church Board in a manner which utilizes the time of the Church Board effectively and which takes full advantage of the expertise and experience that each Church Board member has to offer.
    - ii. In collaboration with the Senior Minister establishes an agenda for each Church Board meeting which covers all matters which should come before the Church Board in the proper exercise of its duties.
    - iii. Provides leadership for all issues of SPCC governance which should come to the attention of the Church Board.
    - iv. Ensures that the Church Board is provided with full information on the condition of the Church with regard to its ministries, mission and vision, and involvement in the community.
    - v. Facilitates and encourages constructive and useful communication between the members of the Church Board.
3. Elders
  - a. There are to be at least three (3) Elders and may be an additional one (1) Elder for every twenty-five (25) members of the Church.
  - b. Each Elder will hold office for a two-year term. An Elder will hold office for no more than two consecutive two-year terms. Following consecutive two-year terms, an Elder may not serve for a period of at least one year.
  - c. After the first two-year term, an Elder will be reaffirmed at the respective Annual Congregational Meeting.
  - d. The Elders are to meet and elect their Chairperson within three (3) weeks after the Annual Congregational Meeting.
  - e. The Chairperson is to ensure the development and training of new Elders.
  - f. Qualifications
    - i. Meet qualifications listed below in Article V, Section C.
    - ii. A man or woman of mature Christian faith whose character closely aligns with the principles outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

- iii. A man or woman who possesses a vision and desire to nurture and shepherd the flock of Jesus Christ.
  - g. Duties and Responsibilities
    - i. Help develop and hold the vision and values of the Church, setting the overall direction.
    - ii. Pursue godliness through the study of God's Word, prayer, ministry, and connection with God's people.
    - iii. Study God's Word together evaluating the health and effectiveness of the Church in accordance with the ideal standard found in the New Testament.
    - iv. Become actively involved in formally or informally teaching God's Word, serving the church in ministry, mentoring others, shepherding people with love and affection, and praying regularly.
    - v. Pray for and visit the sick and shut-in, and ensure they are provided communion.
    - vi. Encouraging restoration and reconciliation within the congregation and society.
    - vii. Serve at the Lord's Table.
    - viii. Hold the Senior Minister accountable for his job performance and his pursuit of godliness, while serving as his close friend, confidant, and supporter.
    - ix. Recommend decisions on matters related to staff hiring and firing.
4. Deacons
- a. There are to be at least eight (8) Deacons and may be an additional two (2) Deacons for every twenty-five (25) members of the Church.
  - b. Each Deacon will hold office for a two-year term. A Deacon will hold office for no more than two consecutive two-year terms. Following consecutive two-year terms, a Deacon may not serve for a period of at least one year.
  - c. After the first two-year term, a Deacon will be reaffirmed at the respective Annual Congregational Meeting.
  - d. The Deacons are to meet and elect their Chairperson within three (3) weeks after the Annual Congregational Meeting.
  - e. The Chairperson is to ensure the development and training of new Deacons.
  - f. Qualifications
    - i. Meet qualifications listed below in Article V, Section C.
    - ii. A man or woman of mature Christian faith whose character closely aligns with the principles outlined in I Timothy 3:8-13.
    - iii. A man or woman who has exhibited a passion to serve in the Church
  - g. Duties and Responsibilities
    - i. Support the Elders in promoting the mission and vision of the Church.
    - ii. Assist in the greeting and ushering of worshippers.
    - iii. Set up sanctuary with such necessities as Communion elements and handouts.
    - iv. Participate in the serving of the Lord's Supper.
    - v. Help in preparation of candidates for baptism.
    - vi. Serve in other ways as may be assigned by the ministerial staff, Elders, or Church Board.
5. Church Board Clerk
- a. The Church Board Clerk will hold office for a one-year term. The Church Board Clerk may hold office for unlimited terms, but must be reaffirmed by the Church membership every year.
  - b. Duties and Responsibilities
    - i. To serve as secretary of the Church Board.
    - ii. To keep minutes of all Church Board and business meetings of the congregation.
    - iii. To perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Church Board.
6. Treasurer
- a. The Treasurer will hold office for a one-year term. The Treasurer may hold office for up to no more than four consecutive one-year terms, but must be reaffirmed by the Church membership every year.
  - b. Duties and Responsibilities
    - i. Serve as the Chairperson of the Finance Committee.
    - ii. Make reports to the Church Board and annual reports to the congregation regarding the financial status of the Church and the work of the Finance Committee.
    - iii. Any other duties related to the Church finances as appropriate.

7. Historian
  - a. This position may be implemented if deemed necessary by the Church Board.
  - b. The Historian will hold office for a one-year term. The Historian may hold office for unlimited terms, but must be reaffirmed by the Church membership every year.
  - c. Duties and Responsibilities
    - i. The Historian shall be charged with keeping a record of the historical events of the Church.
    - ii. Maintain a close working relationship with the current public relations efforts of the Church.
    - iii. Any other duties related to SPCC history and event recording as appropriate.

#### Section B. Position Elected by the Church Board

1. Vice Chairperson of the Church Board
  - a. At the first meeting of the church year, the Church Board is to elect the Vice Chairperson of the Church Board.
  - b. This position is to be filled by a member of the Church Board and he or she is to be prepared to fill the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson of the Church Board. There are no other requirements of this position.
    - i. The Chairperson of the Elders is the suggested person to assume this position.

#### Section C. Qualifications of Church Board Members

1. A member of the Church Board must be a member of the Church.
2. Church Board members should demonstrate Christian faith and maturity such as that described in passages like Galatians 5:13-26.
3. It is essential that prospective candidates accept all of the following principles of responsibility:
  - a. Regular attendance at Sunday services of the Church.
  - b. Regular attendance at meetings of the Church Board.
  - c. Regular contributions to the financial support of the Church to the best of one's ability.

#### Section D. Leave of Absence

1. Members of the Church Board anticipating prolonged absences from Church activities should so inform the Board Chairperson in writing or at a Church Board meeting. Upon receipt of notice of a Board Member's anticipated extended absence, the Church Board is empowered to appoint a substitute to assume the duties of the absentee; the appointee will execute such duties until the return of the absentee or the voting in of another permanent member.

## ARTICLE VI

### JUNIOR DEACONS

#### Section A. Definition & Appointment

1. If necessary, there may be two (2) Junior Deacons for every twenty-five (25) members of the Church.
2. A Junior Deacon is to be a young adult between the ages of fifteen (15) and twenty-one (21) who demonstrates maturity and leadership. This position exists to help develop young leaders.
3. A new candidate for Junior Deacon is not to be voted on by the Church membership, but appointed by the unanimous decision of the Deacons.
4. Each Junior Deacon will hold office for a one-year term and may be reappointed by the Deacons as appropriate.
5. Duties and Responsibilities
  - a. Assist the Deacons in their duties and responsibilities.

## ARTICLE VII

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

#### Section A. Organization

1. The Finance Committee is a permanent committee of the Church Board.
2. The Finance Committee is to be chaired by the Treasurer.
  - a. The Church Board, under the guidance of the Treasurer, is to nominate at least two additional members of the church to join the Finance Committee.
  - b. The Finance Committee shall consist of at least three or more members.

#### Section B. Purpose

1. To develop within the church membership an understanding of the full meaning of Christian stewardship and to properly manage the finances of the Church to meet the financial needs of the Church.

#### Section C. Duties and Responsibilities

1. Promote and conduct stewardship education.
2. Encourage endowments for future development in the Church.
3. Prepare and present a Church budget yearly.
  - a. The proposed Church budget shall be presented to the Church Board with sufficient time so that it may approve a budget and present it to the congregation for final approval at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
4. Regularly monitor compliance with the Church budget throughout the year and report its findings at Church Board meetings.
5. Keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements.
6. Assign three (3) trustworthy members of the Church, who are not on the Finance Committee, to count all monies received during services and keep a separate record of the money collected.
7. Ensure the collected monies are deposited to the credit of the Church in a bank account approved by the Church Board.
8. To manage the finances and accounts of the Church so as to ensure proper and reliable savings and interest received.

## ARTICLE VIII

### BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

#### Section A. Organization

1. The Building & Grounds Committee is a permanent committee of the Church Board.
2. The Church Board is to nominate at least three members of the church to join the Building & Grounds Committee.
3. The Building & Grounds Committee is to meet and elect its own Chairperson.

#### Section B. Purpose

1. To care for all properties of the Church.

#### Section C. Duties and Responsibilities

1. Keep all property and equipment in proper, working condition.
2. Study property needs and make recommendations to the Church Board for improvements.
3. Supervise (and conduct, if necessary) all custodial and landscaping work, ensuring that both are being completed consistently and satisfactorily.
4. Make certain that the Finance Committee adequately insures Church properties against possible loss or damage.
5. Keep track of all warranties and contracts.
6. Keep current asset inventory.

7. Prepare a budget based on known current needs and perceived future needs and provide it to the Finance Committee as requested.
8. Make quarterly reports to the Church Board.

## ARTICLE IX

### DEPARTMENTS

#### Section A. Organization

1. There shall be three (3) departments of the Church.
  - a. Education and Discipleship
  - b. Outreach and Compassion
  - c. Worship and Music
2. Chairpersons
  - a. Each department must be chaired by a Minister on staff, an Elder, or a Deacon. Department Chairpersons are encouraged to have some experience and/or specific gift in the area of interest related to his or her department.
  - b. Department Chairpersons are to be appointed by the Senior Minister.
  - c. Each department Chairperson shall report his or her work and relevant concerns to the Church Board at each Church Board meeting.
3. Each department Chairperson, upon appointment, is to proceed immediately to the existing members of his or her department or, if no previous members exist, to recruit at least two additional persons. There are to be, at minimum, three (3) persons per department. These members do not have to be SPCC members; however, they must regularly attend the Church's Sunday services.
4. Each department shall analyze the needs of the Church pertaining to its field as is relevant to the mission and vision of the Church and plan to meet these needs in concert with the ministerial staff.
5. Each department shall inform and work closely with the ministerial staff in the execution of its duties, even if it is not chaired by a Minister.

#### Section B. Education and Discipleship Department

1. Purpose
  - a. To ensure that the Church has an effective ministry of Christian education and discipleship so that each person in the Church has the possibility of being effectively trained in the teachings of Jesus and the Bible according to his or her level of Christian maturity or knowledge.
2. Duties and Responsibilities
  - a. To develop an organized program of Christian education and discipleship through various study groups, activity groups, prayer groups, and the distribution of Christian literature.
  - b. To ensure the teachings of each group and distributed literature fit the mission and vision of the Church.
  - c. To recruit group leaders who are capable of effective leadership as apparent through their own evidence of Christian maturity, knowledge of the material to be taught, and ability to guide a group.
  - d. To ensure the educating and training of potential Church leaders.

#### Section C. Outreach and Compassion Department

1. Purpose
  - a. To ensure that the Church has an effective ministry of outreach and compassion providing a means for members, in an organized manner, to show evidence of their Christian maturity through generous service to others, both within and outside of the membership of the Church, and to proclaim and give testimony to the Gospel and God's work in this world.
2. Duties and Responsibilities
  - a. To develop an organized program of Christian service, compassion, and hospitality to the needy, poor, shut-in, sick, and oppressed.
  - b. To develop an organized program of evangelism which may include:
    - i. Support of missionaries
    - ii. Support of denominational mission work
    - iii. Training and sending of short-term evangelism/mission teams

- iv. Evangelistic meetings at the Church
- c. To ensure the work of this department fits the mission and vision of the Church.

#### Section D. Worship and Music Department

1. Purpose
  - a. To ensure that the Church has effective worship and music ministries, which encourage persons, through artful, meaningful, organized, and communal ways, to (a) express their love, commitment, and submission to the Lord Jesus and (b) experience the call of the Lord Jesus to follow Him.
2. Duties and Responsibilities
  - a. To have general supervision over all music of the Church.
  - b. To recruit and train (if necessary) artists and speakers to help fulfill this department's purpose.
  - c. To provide rehearsal and/or specific expectations for all persons involved in these ministries, as needed.
  - d. To coordinate public worship services paying special attention to outlining the order of services and assuring a proper worship atmosphere.
  - e. To work in concert with the Senior Minister regarding the development and implementation of worship service standards and practices.

### ARTICLE X

#### SENIOR MINISTER

##### Section A. The Role of the Senior Minister

1. The Senior Minister of the Church shall perform the duties which usually pertain to that office and maintain standing with the Disciples of Christ. In general, his role in the Church shall be in accord with those principles set forth in guidance manuals of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) pertaining to his office.
2. The Senior Minister shall be an *ex officio* member of all organized groups, boards, departments, and committees of the Church.
3. The Senior Minister shall encourage orderly procedures in the life and work of the Church through effective use of the constitution and bylaws.
4. The Senior Minister shall adhere to his ministerial agreement approved by the Church membership.
5. The Senior Minister shall ensure that membership, baptism, marriage, and funeral records are updated and maintained.

##### Section B. Selection

1. The Senior Minister shall be chosen by the Church as hereinafter provided:
  - a. It shall be the policy of the Church to consider only one prospective candidate for Senior Minister at a time. However, information may be secured on several applicants in a given period.
  - b. The Pulpit Committee will recommend a prospective Senior Minister to the Church Board.
    - i. The Pulpit Committee shall be composed of the Chairperson of the Elders, Chairperson of the Deacons, the Chairpersons of all departments, and two active Church members
    - ii. The Chairperson of the Elders shall serve as the Chairperson of the Pulpit Committee.
  - c. The acceptance of the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee must be by at least seventy-five (75) percent majority vote of Church Board members present at a regular or specially called meeting of the Church Board.
  - d. The Church Board will then recommend the prospective Senior Minister to the congregation.
  - e. The acceptance of the recommendation of the Church Board must be accepted by at least seventy-five (75) percent majority vote of Church members present at a regular or specially called meeting of the congregation before a call may be extended.
  - f. The term of the Senior Minister's ministry shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated as outlined in the ministerial agreement approved by SPCC and the Senior Minister. A written statement setting forth the salary to be paid and other conditions of the call shall be made in duplicate, one copy for the Senior Minister and one for the Church.

### Section C. Terms of Employment

1. The duration of employment shall be for a definite or an indefinite period but may be terminated upon sixty (60) days written notice by either the Senior Minister or the Church Board. This period of termination may be adjusted by written mutual agreement.

## ARTICLE XI

### BUSINESS MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

#### Section A. Annual Congregational Meeting

1. The Annual Congregational Meeting is to occur within the month of August.
2. Required agenda to include:
  - a. The election of Church members nominated for the coming year.
  - b. The approval of a proposed Church budget.

#### Section B. Special Meetings

1. Special Meetings of the congregation may be set by the Church Board, as needed.

#### Section C. Notice of Meetings

1. Notice of all business meetings of the congregation (except for amending this constitution) shall be announced at two regular Sunday morning worship services of the Church in advance of the meeting or by a written notice sent through appropriate communication mediums, such as email or letter. The purpose(s) of the meeting shall be indicated in each notice.

## ARTICLE XII

### MODIFYING THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

#### Section A. Modifications and Amendments

1. This document may be modified or amended at any business meeting of the congregation by at least two-thirds majority vote of the Church members present, provided:
  - a. Announcements (stating that proposed changes to the constitution and bylaws are to be voted upon at an upcoming business meeting of the congregation) have been made at least fourteen (14) days prior to the business meeting.
  - b. The congregation is informed that the proposed changes will be readily available, upon request, to members of the congregation at least fourteen (14) days prior to the time the vote is to be taken.

#### Section B. Transition

1. Upon the acceptance of this document in 2008 only, all church offices and positions other than staff are to be re-evaluated and re-appointed within forty-five (45) days through the following procedures:
  - a. The Ministers on staff, the previous Chairperson of the Elders, the previous Chairperson of the Deacons, and the previous Chairperson of the Deaconesses are given authority to nominate members of the Church Board as listed in Article V, Section A.
  - b. Upon nomination, the procedures for appointment listed in Article V, Section A, 1, b are to be followed.
2. During this transition, all previous church offices and positions will remain effective until the election of the new members.