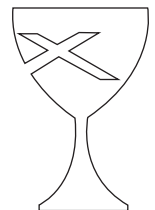


# **ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR CONGREGATIONAL CONDUCT**

**CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**



We, the members of this congregation, following much prayer and discussion of our attitudes and practices in the light of the life and teachings of Jesus, hereby resolve to follow the ethical principles delineated in the New Testament. The following Ethical Guidelines For Congregational Conduct, while not to be construed as a set of rules or law, will help us to make specific application of our New Testament faith to our practices as a congregation.

May God guide us and give us strength and determination as we endeavor to understand and to fulfill the resolves mentioned in these guidelines.

**I**  
**OUR RELATIONSHIP AS MEMBERS TO ONE ANOTHER**

- A. We will treat one another with courtesy and kindness. We will endeavor to maintain an attitude of Christian love in all our relationships.
- B. We will welcome the expression of differing viewpoints and will seek to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence that will encourage free discussion.
- C. We will seek to keep confidences and will refrain from gossip. We will seek in all we do and say to strengthen character and dignify personality.
- D. We will remember that our personal conduct gives evidence of our sincerity and reflects upon the good name of the Church, the Body of Christ.
- E. We will reaffirm this document at least triennially and review these guidelines whenever we are in the process of calling new pastoral leadership.
- F. We will work within the framework of the constitution and by-laws of this congregation. These guidelines will not supersede our own church's constitution and by-laws but may be helpful in their revision.
- G. We will establish and follow a policy on receiving and using special gifts, memorials, trusts, and endowed funds in such a way as to be consistent with Christian stewardship. Reception of the gift entails a consideration of its appropriateness. The policy should also give consideration to when an item outlasts its usefulness.

**II**  
**OUR RELATIONSHIP AS MEMBERS TO OUR CHURCH OFFICERS AND LEADERS**

- A. We will select our officers intentionally and impartially on the basis of their commitment, competence, compassion and maturity in the faith. We are committed to having men, women and youth serve in the various responsibilities of the congregation.
- B. We will endeavor to distribute our offices among many persons and be appreciative of the services of every member.
- C. We will provide them opportunities for training, skill development and faith formation. We will provide the resources needed for each to be an effective leader.
- D. We will nurture through encouragement and prayer our officers, committees, classes, auxiliary groups and the board of the congregation.
- E. We will expect our officers to manifest Christian principles in their conduct.
- F. We will offer constructive support and feedback to our officers and leaders.

**III**  
**OUR RELATIONSHIP AS MEMBERS TO OUR MINISTER(S)**

- A. When seeking a minister, we will follow our denominational guidelines, work through the Regional Office, and will conduct all negotiations with integrity, courtesy and orderly procedure, without unfair discrimination with regard to marital status, sex, age or race.
- B. We will keep informed on how ministers are compensated in our denomination through information supplied by the Pension Fund of the Christian Church and by the regional office, and will support our ministers with salary, housing, a pension plan, health insurance, necessary expense funds, vacation, and the time and financial means for continuing education consistent with the demands and resources of our congregation.
- C. We will provide our minister with necessary facilities and equipment for his or her work and will respect study hours. We will be considerate of the need for rest and relaxation and will be sensitive to the need for time with family.
- D. We will respect the time and talents of members of the minister's family and will have no greater expectations of them than of other lay people.
- E. We will grant our minister responsible freedom of the pulpit and the right to present Christian convictions without fear.
- F. We will respect and cooperate with our minister's spiritual and intellectual leadership.
- G. We will call on our present minister for weddings, funerals and other special services. Our former ministers or others unconnected with the congregation may be invited to participate in such services only when appropriate and at the present minister's invitation.
- H. We will cooperate with our minister to best utilize our congregation's talents in fulfilling the mission of the church.
- I. We will keep our minister informed when pastoral services are needed.
- J. We will support our minister's reasonable participation in Cluster, Area, District, Regional, and/or General activities of the denomination, as well as civic and ecumenical activities.
- K. We will encourage and assist our minister through constructive feedback, appropriate praise, constant prayer and faithful participation with him or her in ministry.
- L. Because the congregation is a priesthood of believers that minister to one another (pastor to the congregation and congregation to the pastor), our relationships in the church will be covenantal as well as contractual, and we will maintain and conclude all pastoral relationships in a spirit of Christian love.
- M. The church will be sensitive and will voluntarily find specific ways to go the second mile in ministry with love, compassion and trust in the event of personal and/or family crisis, illness of the minister or minister's family, a death in the family, psychological or emotional difficulties or other extenuating circumstances.
- N. We will have an active Pastoral Relations Committee or a corresponding body to continually monitor the relationship between our minister and the congregation, and we will call on the assistance of the regional staff

before a conflict situation grows into a crisis.

- O. We will observe similar appropriate principles with all other professional staff of our congregation.

#### **IV**

##### **OUR RELATIONSHIP AS MEMBERS TO OUR COMMUNITY AND/OR COUNTRY**

- A. We accept our missional responsibility for the moral and spiritual development of our community. We agree to live in a manner consistent with our Christian convictions.
- B. Because our Christian convictions set the standard for our citizenship, our faith will lead us to be informed, to respect law, to vote our conscience and to influence government officials in working toward a just and morally responsible community.
- C. We will be attentive to the moral and ethical implications of every project we are asked to support.
- D. We will maintain a good credit standing in the community. We will expect our staff to do the same.
- E. We will respect the rights and privileges of persons living near the church and will endeavor not to inconvenience our neighbors nor harm their property.
- F. We will establish no barriers that might prevent anyone from worshiping with us.
- G. We will work in a complementary way with community service agencies and organizations to most effectively serve and improve our community.

#### **V**

##### **OUR RELATIONSHIP AS MEMBERS TO THE CHURCHES IN OUR COMMUNITY**

- A. We will seek to understand the beliefs and practices of others. While we may be constructively critical of their doctrine, we will refrain from unkind remarks about people who differ from us.
- B. We will encourage unity and harmony among the various communions of Christian peoples and will give evidence of our sincerity through participation at appropriate local, state/province, national and/or world levels.
- C. We will not be part of proselytizing members from other congregations in our community, nor will we exploit the problems or crises of other congregations. We will present the witness of our congregation in a manner not injurious to others.
- D. We will respect the privilege of borrowing from other congregations.
- E. We will consider sharing our facilities according to the necessities of the community and the purpose for which they are needed.

## **VI**

### **OUR RELATIONSHIP AS MEMBERS TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

- A. We will seek to know and to understand the various points of view within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and will respect the opinions of those whose interpretations differ from our own.
- B. We will recognize our covenantal relationship with the Disciples and will give generous and prayerful support to our programs at home and overseas.
- C. We will endeavor to know, claim and live our identity as set forth in the Preamble for the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and be knowledgeable about the actions of the Cluster, Area, District, Regional, and General Assemblies.
- D. Mission gifts received by our congregation will be used for their intended purpose(s). Budget commitments for world outreach causes are as binding as those secured for our local obligations.
- E. We will encourage our minister(s) and our members to serve beyond the local congregation in the Cluster, Area, District, Regional and/or General manifestations of Disciple work.

## **VII**

### **OUR RELATIONSHIP AS MEMBERS TO THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL**

- A. With the church universal we proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of the world, in his name and by his grace we accept our mission of witness and service to all people.
- B. We are bound to God and one another through covenant, and through baptism we are made one with the whole people of God.
- C. We are called to express the unity God bestows by ecumenical study, dialogue, cooperation and expression.
- D. Because all Christians in the church universal have the obligation to uphold the Christian life in the face of the evil forces of our day, we will cooperate with other church bodies in living the Christian witness.
- E. We will support acceptable agencies of Christian cooperation in local, national and global manifestations of the Church's life.
- F. So as to establish no barriers that might prevent any of Jesus' followers from communing with us; we will remember that our LORD invites his believers to the Lord's Table in the spirit of Christian love and unity.



**WE THE MEMBERS OF**

Cherry Log Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

(NAME OF CHURCH)

OF Cherry Log, Georgia

(NAME OF CITY, STATE/PROVINCE)

ON THE Twenty-second DAY OF April, 2017,

**DESIRE TO UPHOLD THE COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS  
WE SHARE WITH ONE ANOTHER, OUR CHURCH OFFICERS AND  
LEADERS, OUR MINISTER(S), OUR COMMUNITY AND COUNTRY,  
THE CHURCHES IN OUR COMMUNITY, THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST), AND THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL  
REGARDING THESE GUIDELINES.**

**SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE CONGREGATION BY:**



\_\_\_\_\_, CHAIR/MODERATOR OF THE BOARD

REAFFIRMED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE) (BOARD CHAIR)

REAFFIRMED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE) (BOARD CHAIR)

