

Constitution and Bylaws of the First Christian Church
Warner Robins, Georgia

PREAMBLE

We, the members of First Christian Church, a congregationally governed body, in order to promote the work of the Church Universal in the spirit of Christ and thus advance His Kingdom, do hereby adopt this constitution and bylaws.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this congregation shall be First Christian Church of Warner Robins, affiliated with the brotherhood known as Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this congregation is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in faithful response to God's will and purposes as revealed through Jesus Christ and in the world; to seek in all persons a faith and commitment to Jesus Christ; to serve the community of which it is a part; to bring the gospel message to bear upon society; to sustain and be sustained by the general and regional manifestations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); to work cooperatively with Christians in other communions; to seek the oneness of the body of Christ; and in all ways to seek to make known the love of God.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this congregation shall consist of those who are now identified as members/associate members and those who shall unite with this congregation by baptism, transfer of membership from another church or by associate membership. Voting privileges shall be accorded to all members. Persons who are in the local area because of an assignment and members of their immediate family, who are members of a congregation in their home community may present themselves for associate membership for the period of time in which they are assigned to the local area without affecting their home church membership. Such membership shall expire when they are reassigned to another locale or they decide to become permanent residents in the local area.

ARTICLE IV. RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE
CONGREGATION

The congregation shall manage its affairs under the Lordship of Jesus Christ; determine its faithfulness to the gospel with respect to the basis of membership; own, control and encumber its property; organize and carry out the mission and witness of the congregation; establish its budgets and financial policies; call its pastor(s) and other staff; and participate, through voting representatives, in regional and general assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in forming the corporate judgments of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

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The congregation shall demonstrate voluntarily its mutual concern for the nurture, mission and witness of the whole church, and, among other responsibilities, it shall: proclaim the gospel; administer baptism and the Lord's Supper; provide for the spiritual nurture of its members; grow in understanding that the church is a universal fellowship; transcend all barriers within the human family such as race and culture; be faithful in Christian stewardship, striving to share proportionately in providing resources for the total life, work and witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); choose voting representatives to the general and regional assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); and seek to realize the oneness of the church of Jesus Christ through cooperation with other churches of the community and with present and emerging ecumenical structures.

The congregation shall sustain its pastor(s) in faithfulness and honor, and in matters pertaining to relationships with the pastor(s) seek counsel from the executive regional minister.

The congregation shall exercise and enjoy all other rights, privileges and responsibilities requisite or appropriate to carrying out its purpose.

ARTICLE V. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

This congregation shall hold a regular annual meeting to elect officers of the congregation, elders, deacons, trustees, and approve an operating budget. Special meetings will be called by the chairperson or vice-chairperson or by written petition of five or more members of the congregation. Notice of regular or special meetings of the congregation shall be given at a regular Sunday service of the church at least 2 weeks (14 days) in advance of the meeting. Purpose, date, time and place of meeting shall be included in this notice.

ARTICLE VI. CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

SECTION 1. CHURCH ORGANIZATIONAL MAKEUP

The Church organization shall consist of the following:

1. The General Board
2. The Officers of the Congregation
3. The Elders, Deacons, Trustees, Historian
4. The Cabinet
5. The Standing Committees

**ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS, GENERAL BOARD, ELDERS, DEACONS, TRUSTEES,
HISTORIAN, CABINET, COMMITTEES**

SECTION 1. OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION

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The congregation shall elect from its members the following officers:

1. Chairperson- Limited to 2 successive terms
2. Vice-Chairperson- Limited to 2 successive terms
3. Secretary- No limit on terms.
4. Treasurer- No limit on terms.
5. Financial Secretary- No limit on terms.

These officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the congregation for terms of one year and shall serve the congregation, general board and cabinet as set forth in this Constitution and Bylaws.

Sub Section A. QUALIFICATIONS

1. Officers must be members of the congregation.
2. Officers must be active in the congregation's life and give evidence of seeking to grow in their understanding and practice of the Christian life. Such evidence would include the following:
 - a. Conduct one's life in light of the teachings of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Promotion of good will and Christian fellowship in the congregation and community.
 - c. Attendance at the worship services and stated meetings of the congregation.
 - d. Regular financial contributions to the support of the congregation and its outreach program.
 - e. Willingness to fulfill assignments in behalf of the congregation.
 - f. Demonstrated skills or evident potential in carrying out responsibilities of the particular office.

Sub Section B. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The chairperson shall preside at all stated and special called meetings of the congregation and general board and perform such other duties normally associated with the office of chairperson.
2. The vice-chairperson shall serve in support of the chairperson, preside in his or her absence at meetings of the congregation and general board. Shall act as chairperson of the cabinet and perform such other duties normally associated with the office of vice-chairperson.
3. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation, general board and cabinet and provide for these minutes to be reviewed and approved by their respective bodies.

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4. The treasurer shall disburse all funds of this congregation as authorized by the budget or special action by the general board when such items are not in the budget, provide accurate records of all expenditures, make monthly written reports to the general board. Provide an end of the year report to the general board and the congregation. Serve as a member of the stewardship committee.

5. The financial secretary shall receive all funds for this congregation. Receipt, deposit, and record keeping for funds received shall be in accordance with board approved "Procedures for collection, disbursement and accounting of church funds." Serve as a member of the stewardship committee.

SECTION 2. GENERAL BOARD – AUTHORITY, MEETINGS AND MEMBERSHIP

The congregation shall have a general board which shall be responsible to the congregation and have authority to act on behalf of the congregation when it is not in a congregational meeting.

The general board shall be responsible for receiving reports from its pastor(s), officers and the various organizations within the congregation. It shall establish by its action the program and budget of the congregation, subject to action by the congregation at its annual meeting. It shall be responsible also for conducting all legal matters of the congregation and carry out such other responsibilities as may be defined in this Constitution and Bylaws.

Sub Section A. GENERAL BOARD ORGANIZATIONAL MAKEUP

The General Board shall consist of the following:

1. The Officers of the Congregation
2. The Elders and Deacons
3. A representative of the Trustees, CMF, CWF, CYF
4. The Pastor(s) of the congregation as an ex-officio member

Sub Section B. AUTHORITY

1. In keeping with the traditions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the ultimate authority of the congregation shall rest with the congregation. All organizations within the congregation shall be responsible to and report regularly to the general board and through it to the congregation.

2. The general board shall concern itself with policy rather than administrative matters, taking into full account the responsibility of the congregation to the total nurture, witness and mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the needs of the immediate community in which the members of the congregation live.

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Sub Section C. MEETINGS

1. The general board shall hold its regular meetings on the 1st Monday of each month, except those months when the first day of the month is Monday. In this case, the meeting shall be on the second Monday. Other exceptions to the regular meeting date may be approved by the general board in a meeting prior to the schedule change. Special meetings shall be held as called by the chairperson of the congregation or upon request of five or more members of the general board.
2. 40 percent of members of the general board shall constitute a quorum.

Sub Section D. MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership of the general board shall be composed of the officers of the congregation, elders, deacons, and a selected representative of the trustees, CMF, CWF, CYF.
2. The pastor(s) of the congregation shall serve as member(s) ex-officio of the general board.

Sub Section E. ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE

1. Officers of the congregation shall serve on the general board by virtue of office held and for their current term of office.
2. Elders, deacons and trustees shall be elected to the general board by the congregation. Elders, deacons and trustees shall not succeed themselves, but may be re-elected to the office after one year has elapsed.
3. Selected representatives of trustees, CMF, CWF, and CYF shall be members of the general board by virtue of office held and for their current terms of office. Selection of representative is the responsibility of each of these individual groups.
4. Vacancies in any office of the church shall be filled by appointment by the Chairperson of the congregation, in consultation with the pastor, and approved by the general board. Such appointments shall be for the remainder of the church year only, after which an election shall be held to fill the un-expired term.

Sub Section F. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The general board shall be responsible for conducting the business affairs of the congregation and providing for the planning, coordination, resourcing, evaluation and implementation of the work and activities of the congregation.

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2. The general board shall receive regular written reports from its committees and from other organizations within the congregation: and it shall act upon such reports with approval, disapproval, modification or referral back to the respective committee or other organization.
3. The general board shall receive the proposed annual budget of the congregation from the stewardship committee and recommend its approval or approval with amendment to the congregation at its annual meeting. Subsequent over-expenditure or requests for additional funds from organizations within the congregation shall be approved or disapproved by the general board.
4. The general board shall establish standing committees as follows:

Worship	Service & Fellowship
Church Growth	Membership
Outreach	Christian Education
Stewardship	Property
Music	
- a. The chairperson elect of the congregation, vice-chairperson elect, secretary elect, and pastor shall constitute a committee to select the librarian, historian and the standing committee chairpersons, for the coming year from the membership of the congregation in the month of November.
- b. This committee shall then be available to assist respective committee chairpersons in the selection of the members of each committee.
5. The general board shall establish, when necessary, a pulpit committee for the purpose of securing a pastor for the congregation. Membership and responsibilities of the pulpit committee shall be as described in Article VIII, 2.
6. The general board shall establish other committees as needed for the conduct of its work.
7. The general board shall select congregational delegates to the regional assembly no later than the November meeting and to the general assembly at the appropriate time if a decision is made to send delegates to general assembly.
8. The general board shall select representatives to serve on the board of Vineville Christian Towers at the November general board meeting.

SECTION 3. ELDERS, DEACONS, TRUSTEES AND HISTORIAN

The congregation shall have Elders, Deacons, Trustees and Historian.

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Sub Section A. ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE

1. Approximately one third of the elders, deacons and trustees shall be elected by the congregation each year for a term of three years. The total number of trustees shall be three. The number of deacons shall be approximately 8 for each 100 participating congregational members. The number of elders shall be approximately 4 for each 100 participating congregational members, as listed in the yearbook report for the previous year.

2. The historian shall be appointed by committee as stated in Article VII, 2, F, 4, a.

Sub Section B. QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications for elders, deacons, trustees and historian shall be the same as described for officers of the congregation in Article VII, 1, A.

Sub Section C. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Elders shall promote the growth and welfare of the Church; give spiritual guidance to the members with respect to regular attendance at worship, visitation of the sick, and concern for the morally delinquent and spiritually indifferent; give thoughtful consideration to policies of this church that will enable it to fulfill its complete mission; encourage by example and word the missionary, evangelistic, education, and stewardship responsibilities of the people; serve at the Lord's Table, and be responsible for seeing that our shut-ins have the opportunity to partake of Communion; and perform such other duties as may be required.

2. Deacons shall cooperate with the Elders in promoting growth and welfare of the Church; assist in the greeting and ushering of the worshipers; take responsibility for the preparation and care of the Communion service; distribute the Communion and receive offerings; assist in financial canvasses, visitation, and preparation of candidates for baptism; give counsel and service in business affairs and program activities of this Church; cooperate in ministering to the needy; and perform such other duties as may be required.

3. Trustees shall act as legal agents of this Church in all business matters under the direction of the general board and subject to approval of this congregation; hold legal title to all Church property and handle all business transactions related thereto; have supervision over all endowment and trust funds; and perform such other duties required by the State of Georgia.

4. The Church Historian shall gather and preserve data pertaining to the history, life, and work of this Church, and make available for publication any historical materials authorized by this Church and present to the congregation the annual historical statement.

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SECTION 4. CABINET

The congregation shall have a cabinet, which shall be responsible for coordinating the program work of the congregation and generally assisting the pastor(s) in administering the same.

Sub Section A. MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

1. The cabinet shall consist of the chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary of the congregation, the pastor(s), chairpersons of the standing committees, the selected representatives of the CMF, CWF, CYF and such other persons assigned by the general board. It shall be chaired by vice-chairperson of the congregation.
2. The cabinet shall meet at least quarterly and the chairperson shall call such special meetings as necessary.

Sub Section B. RESPONSIBILITIES

The cabinet shall consider, initiate and coordinate the activities and programs of the congregation and review the procedures of implementing such activities and programs in keeping with the policies as determined by the general board.

SECTION 5. COMMITTEES

Sub Section A. MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

1. The standing committees shall be established as stated in Article VII, 2, E.
2. Each committee shall organize itself to conduct the business for which it is responsible, meet regularly to attend to its business, and plan its general program, which shall be presented through the cabinet to the general board. Upon approval by the general board, the committee shall proceed to administer its program in cooperation with other committees. Regular written reports shall be made to the General Board.

Sub Section B. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Worship Committee
 - a. It shall be the purpose of this committee to lead the membership in a genuine experience of worship in the public services and to enrich personal and family devotional life.

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b. It shall be responsible for the public worship of the church, its pulpit supplies, the administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and mid-week and special prayer services.

c. It shall be responsible for selecting, training and scheduling all acolytes.

2. Church Growth Committee

a. It shall be the purpose of this committee to cultivate evangelistic spirit within the Church and to plan and administer the evangelistic program.

b. It shall be responsible for developing an evangelistic Church, sponsoring a year-round program of evangelism which reaches into every age level and every phase of the Church life, compiling a list of prospective members and planning and directing special evangelistic campaigns.

3. Outreach Committee

a. It shall be the purpose of this committee to create and foster a world vision within the Church and its auxiliary organizations and to lead in planning and administering the world-work program of the Church.

b. It shall be responsible for planning and promoting a definite program of missionary education in every department of the Church; recommending the Church's annual missionary and benevolent budget; enlisting support for missions and brotherhood causes; caring for local and general benevolent needs not otherwise provided for; sponsoring interdenominational activities and projects of social action; promoting conventions, conferences and retreats; recruiting and supporting lifework recruits; and keeping records of all missionary giving and action in the church.

4. Stewardship Committee

a. It shall be the purpose of this committee to develop within the membership an understanding of the full meaning of Christian stewardship and so to direct the financial program of the Church that it will not only supply the financial needs but prove a means of spiritual enrichment and character building for each one participating.

b. It shall be responsible for keeping alive in the congregation the realization of its stewardship obligations, promoting stewardship education, supervising the preparation and subscribing of the Church budget, keeping accurate records, providing for an annual audit of the books and encouraging endowments for future development in the Church and world work.

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c. The chairperson of the stewardship committee shall prepare written procedures to direct the disbursement and receiving of funds. The procedure must be submitted to the general board for approval by January of each year and may be modified as required by the general board throughout the year.

d. The committee shall prepare the proposed annual budget and present it to the general board not later than the October meeting for action.

5. Property Committee

a. It shall be the purpose of this committee to care for all the properties of the Church.

b. It shall be responsible, in cooperation with the Trustees, for keeping all property and equipment in proper condition, studying needs and making recommendations for improvements, supervising the work of the custodian, caring for grounds and keeping properties adequately insured against possible loss or damage.

6. Service and Fellowship Committee

a. It shall be the purpose of this committee to develop a spirit of fellowship and love within the congregation founded on a common love for Christ.

b. It shall be responsible for visiting the shut-ins, and showing concern for the sick by visitation, correspondence, and/or flowers. It shall provide an adequate program of social life for the Church.

7. Membership Committee

a. It shall be the purpose of this committee to maintain the closest possible contact with the entire Church membership to the end that each member may function effectively in the life of the Church.

b. It shall be responsible for pastoral oversight of the membership, assisting the pastor in keeping accurate up to date records. It shall in cooperation with the Church Growth Committee and the Elders, direct visitation efforts to new and inactive members.

c. It shall be responsible for organizing and maintaining both the Prayer Chain and Information Chain for the congregation.

d. It shall oversee the publication and distribution of the Church newsletter.

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8. Christian Education Committee

- a. It shall be the purpose of this committee to develop an effective program of religious education for the entire constituency of the Church in keeping with the general objectives of Christian Education.
- b. It shall be responsible for planning and administering the total education program of the Church, including church school, youth activities, mid-week education projects, leadership education, distribution of Christian literature and fostering Christian home life. It shall also cooperate with other groups of the Church in planning for an educational program.
- c. This committee shall be responsible for selecting persons from the membership of the congregation to serve as Church School Superintendent and Assistant Church School Superintendent. The Church School Superintendent and Assistant shall administer, guide and promote the Church School programs.
- d. This committee shall oversee the organization and maintenance of the Church's nurseries. It shall be responsible for the recruiting of nursery personnel and providing nursery care at all special services and activities of the Church. Members of this committee shall assist the pastor in hiring/dismissal of paid positions within the nursery program.

10. Music Committee

- a. It shall be the purpose of this committee to work closely with the Worship Committee in providing music for regular morning worship and special services where required.
- b. It shall be responsible for music programs of the Church including practice sessions for all choirs. Members of this department will assist the Personnel Committee in hiring of paid positions within the music program.
- c. It shall be responsible for purchasing church music and the maintenance of church musical instruments.

SECTION 6. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Sub Section A. SELECTION

The committee shall be appointed by the general board. Maximum number of members shall be four, the pastor shall provide a nomination for one of these positions.

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Sub Section B. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. It shall be responsible to establish working agreements for all church staff and other personnel with the exception of the pastor.
2. Prepare job descriptions. Recommend salaries and benefits, including those for the pastor. Make annual review of these salaries and benefits no later than September and provide any recommended changes in the personnel budget to the stewardship committee for consideration in the proposed annual budget.
3. Serve to counsel and advise church staff in all personnel matters.
4. Act as a pastoral relations department to serve as liaison between congregation and the pastor.

SECTION 7. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Sub Section A. MEMBERSHIP

1. No later than the September general board meeting the chairperson of the congregation shall appoint a nominating committee composed of two elders - one to serve as the chairperson, two deacons, and two members of the congregation not members of the general board.
2. Appointment of the nominating committee shall be ratified by the general board.

Sub Section B. RESPONSIBILITIES

The nominating committee shall consider qualifications (in accordance with qualifications outlined in these bylaws), secure consent of each nominee, and prepare a slate consisting of one nominee for each vacancy. This slate shall be submitted to the general board for approval/disapproval at the October meeting. The board-approved slate of nominees shall be presented to the congregation for approval/disapproval at the annual congregation meeting. The congregation shall have the right to make nominations from the floor provided the consent of the nominee has been obtained. If there is more than one nominee for a vacant office the person receiving the most votes shall be considered elected.

ARTICLE VIII. PASTOR (S)

SECTION 1. RESPONSIBILITIES

Sub Section A. The pastor (senior) of the congregation shall serve as spiritual leader and chief administrator of the congregation, and, in cooperation with the chairperson of the

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congregation and the general board, encourage orderly procedures in the life and work of the congregation in compliance with the congregation's constitution and bylaws and the policies and procedures of the congregation and general board.

Sub Section B. The pastor (senior) shall give special attention to the selection and training of the congregation's leaders.

Sub Section C. The pastor (senior) shall be an ex-officio member, without vote, of all boards, committees, departments, commissions, task groups and constituency groups of the congregation.

SECTION 2. SELECTION

Sub Section A. The pastor(s) shall be chosen by the congregation as hereinafter described:

1. A representative committee of a minimum of five members nominated by the chairperson and elected by the general board shall serve as a pulpit committee and be responsible for recommending a prospective pastor to the general board. This committee will be automatically dissolved upon acceptance of the new pastor by the congregation.
2. The pulpit committee shall utilize the services of the congregation's regional minister for information and counsel concerning prospective candidates.
3. The pulpit committee shall consult only one prospective pastor at a time; however, information may be secured on several persons in a given period.
4. The general board, at a stated or called meeting, may approve the recommendation of the pulpit committee by at least two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Upon approval, the general board shall recommend employment of the prospective pastor to the congregation.
5. The congregation, in a stated or called meeting, may approve the recommendation of the general board by at least a 90% majority of members present and voting.
6. Upon approval of the congregation, a call shall be extended to the prospective pastor by the general board, in behalf of the congregation.

SECTION 3. TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Sub Section A. An agreement of employment setting forth the compensatory package to be paid to the pastor and other conditions of the call shall be provided to the pastor, with a copy filed in the congregational records and a copy provided to the regional office.

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Sub Section B. The term of ministry shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated upon 60 days notice by the pastor or the congregation.

Sub Section C. Voluntary resignation by the pastor shall be submitted to the general board in writing, after consultation with the chairperson of the congregation and elders.

Sub Section D. Dismissal of the pastor shall be dealt with confidentially between the pastor, the chairperson of the congregation, the elders and the regional minister prior to a dismissal vote by the general board.

1. A majority vote of the general board members present and voting shall be required to recommend dismissal of the pastor to the congregation.
2. The congregation, in a stated or called meeting shall take final action regarding dismissal, which shall require a majority vote of the members present and voting.

ARTICLE IX. CHURCH STAFF AND OTHER PERSONNEL

SECTION 1. EMPLOYMENT OF CHURCH STAFF

The term "Church Staff", other than the pastor(s), shall pertain to such persons and positions as Organist, Choir Director, Youth Worker, Assistant to the Pastor, Education Director, Coordinators, Aides, etc. The employment or dismissal of such persons shall be by the General Board upon recommendation of the pastor and Personnel Committee.

SECTION 2. EMPLOYMENT OF OTHER PERSONNEL

The term "Other Personnel" shall apply to all other employees such as Secretaries, Custodian, Maid, Nursery Attendants, etc. Employment and dismissal of such persons shall be by the pastor in consultation with the proper committee chairperson and chairperson of the congregation.

SECTION 3. EMPLOYMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The terms and conditions of all employment shall be made in duplicate, one copy for the church files and the other for the employee.

SECTION 4. JURISDICTION

All employees of the church shall execute their duties under the jurisdiction of the pastor. They shall consider themselves a part of the pastor's administration, and in the event that the pastor resigns or is dismissed, all church employees (church staff and personnel) shall come under the direct supervision of the general board and the chairperson of the congregation until another pastor is employed and on the field.

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ARTICLE X. CHURCH YEAR

The annual year of the Church shall be from January 1 through December 31.

ARTICLE XI. PROCEDURE

All meetings shall be governed by the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended, upon two thirds vote of the general board recommending amendments(s) to the congregation and by a two thirds vote of the congregation in a stated or special meeting, provided either written notice of the proposed amendment(s) has been sent through the mail to members of the congregation at least ten days prior to the time the vote is to be taken or the proposed amendment(s) has been read at or following two successive Sunday morning worship services immediately prior to the time the vote is to be taken.

The general board, within five years of the adoption of this Constitution and Bylaws shall appoint a committee to review and recommend changes/amendments required.