

BY LAWS
OF
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

Vancouver, Washington

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MAGNA CHARTA

“The Magna Charta of Christian Science means much, *multum in parvo*,--all-in-one and one-in-all. It stands for the inalienable, universal rights of men. Essentially democratic, its government is administered by the common consent of the governed, wherein and whereby man governed by his creator is self-governed. The church is the mouthpiece of Christian Science,--its law and gospel are according to Christ Jesus; its rules are health, holiness, and immortality,--equal rights and privileges, equality of the sexes, rotation in office.”

Mary Baker Eddy

The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany, pages 254 and 255.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Vancouver congregation had its beginning in the summer of 1904, when a small group of Christian Scientists in the city began to hold informal services in their homes. On April 30, 1905, a special meeting was held to organize a Christian Science Society. Formal organization was effected on Sunday, October 30, 1905. In 1907 the group was recognized by The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, as Christian Science Society, Vancouver, Washington.

On April 9, 1912, a decision was made to discuss the building of a church on land at 26th and Broadway, and on May 22, 1912, a bungalow type structure, seating 120 was ready for occupancy.

The formalities for the organization of a church were completed on October 19, 1912, and on November 30, 1912, a charter was granted by the State of Washington.

In the winter of 1930-31 the existing building was remodeled and enlarged and a new Sunday school annex was added making it possible to hold Sunday school and church services at the same hour. In 1934 the loan from The Mother Church was repaid and a church dedication was held.

In 1954 it was decided that there was need for a larger church and Sunday school. Land was purchased to the north and east of our building, an architect was selected, plans were drawn up and presented to the membership, and in 1955 the plans were approved and it was voted to proceed at once with construction.

The new church of Norman brick in tans and brown was built with very little disruption of services. The auditorium and foyer were erected and the first services were held in the new church on July 25, 1956.

Then the Sunday school and the connecting structure were begun. In May, 1959 this part was completed and classes were held in the new Sunday school. The construction of the entire building was completed in September, 1959. The church was dedicated on September 10, 1961.

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ARTICLE I ORGANIZATION

Section 1 Name

This church, a branch of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts (hereinafter referred to as The Mother Church), shall be known as First Church of Christ, Scientist, Vancouver, Washington.

Section 2 Relationship to The Mother Church

As a branch of The Mother Church, this church recognizes the *Manual of The Mother Church* by Mary Baker Eddy as the authority for its status and activities.

Section 3 Tenets

The Tenets of this church shall be those given in the *Manual of The Mother Church*.

Section 4 Pastor

The *Bible* and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy shall be the only pastor of this church.

Section 5 Activities

This church shall conduct Sunday services and Wednesday evening meetings and other services authorized by the *Manual of The Mother Church*, maintain a Sunday School, maintain a public Reading Room, provide one or more free Christian Science lectures annually, and carry forward the work of Christian Science in an orderly and Christly manner.

ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Qualifications

- A. All members of this church shall subscribe to the Tenets of The Mother Church, and live consistently with the teachings of the *Bible* and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Members shall be obedient to the *Manual of The Mother Church* and to the by-laws of this church.
- B. Applicants shall have attended this branch church for at least six months. Applicants transferring their membership from another Christian Science church or society may apply for membership immediately. A member of this or any other Christian Science Sunday school may also apply at any time. Applicants shall be at least 12 years of age.
- C. The members of this church shall not be members of any other denomination, Christian Science society, or church except The Mother Church.
- D. A member of The Mother Church, who is also a member of another branch church, and who is visiting temporarily in this area, may, upon application to the Clerk, and ratification by the Board of Trustees, be permitted to serve on any committee of this Church, but may not vote, attend membership meetings, chair a committee, or serve on the Board of Trustees.

Section 2 Application Procedure

- A. Notices inviting applications for membership shall be read from the desk at least one Sunday and one Wednesday each month.
- B. Persons desiring to unite with this church shall make application on forms provided for this purpose.
- C. If the applicant has a letter of withdrawal from a Christian Science church or society, or a letter of withdrawal from a church or society of another denomination, such letter should be submitted with the application. An applicant who has been denied a letter of withdrawal from a church or society of another denomination shall be eligible, if otherwise qualified.
- D. Applications may be submitted to the clerk of this church at any time.

- E. The application must be endorsed by two members of this church who are in good standing and who shall know the applicant to be a sincere student of the *Bible* and of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy.
- F. Should the applicant be unknown to members of this church, two members of the Board may endorse his or her application if they find the applicant qualified after due investigation.
- G. The Board shall make due inquiry, including an individual interview, to verify the eligibility of each applicant.

Section 3 Notification and Election

- A. Each church member shall receive notification within ten days of the names of applicants who have been approved by the Board. If no valid objection is received by the Board within ten days of the date the letter was mailed or emailed, the applicant shall be considered accepted.
- B. Any member having reason to believe that an applicant should not be accepted into membership shall immediately notify the Board verbally or in writing to express his or her objection. The objector shall appear before the Board and explain his or her reason(s) for objecting and the Board shall make a full investigation. A majority of the Board shall be necessary to sustain the objection. If the objection is sustained, the clerk shall send a written notification of the rejection to the applicant, but it shall not be necessary to give the reason(s) for the rejection.
- C. Applicants shall be notified in writing of their acceptance and shall be received into membership by signing the Roll of Membership as soon as possible.

Section 4 Duties of Members

- A. As the government of this church is democratic, each member shall bear a share in its responsibilities and active work. It is the duty of each member to study and observe the church by-laws and standing rules, to take an active, unselfish interest in all matters that pertain to the welfare of the church, to attend the services and business meetings, to abide lovingly by the decisions of the majority, and to contribute to the spiritual progress of this church and to its financial support.
- B. For the protection of this church, members shall refrain from discussing church finances and business with non-members.

- C. Members should notify the clerk promptly in writing of any change in name, address, telephone number, or email address. Upon election to membership in The Mother Church or completion of class instruction, the clerk should also be notified.

Section 5 Withdrawal

Upon written application to the Board, any member shall be given a letter of withdrawal.

Section 6 Supreme Authority

A. The supreme authority of this church shall be vested in its membership, and any action of the Board of Trustees or other officers of the church shall be subject to direction and revision by the membership at any regular business meeting or at any special meeting called for that purpose.

B. The government of this church shall be administered in accordance with the bylaws and standing rules approved by the members.

Section 7 Standing Rules

The standing rules of this church shall comprise those main motions adopted by the members which are of an indefinitely continuing nature.

ARTICLE III DISCIPLINE

Section 1 Cause

A member of this church who is believed to have departed from the qualifications for membership as described in Article II, Section I A, may be subject to discipline.

Section 2 Procedure

- A. A member of this church who believes another member to be subject to discipline shall approach that fellow member in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17. If compliance with the scriptural command is without favorable results, the complainant shall present the charge to the Board in person or in writing.

- B. The Board, after prayerful consideration and in strict privacy, shall offer the alleged offender ample opportunity for a hearing on the charges. The Board shall then act to exonerate, place on probation, or dismiss from membership the individual concerned. Such individual shall be notified of the Board's action by a letter from the Board sent by certified mail with return receipt requested.
- C. Any member of this church who has been suspended or dropped from the Roll of Membership may appeal to the Board, within thirty days of such action, to request a hearing before the full membership at a special meeting called for this purpose. The decision of the members shall be final.
- D. While any member is on probation, he or she shall not hold office, attend church business meetings, serve on committees, or act in any official capacity.

ARTICLE IV OFFICERS

Section 1 Enumeration

The elective officers of this church shall be a first reader, a second reader, five trustees, and a president. The executive officers shall be a chairperson and a vice-chairperson of the Board. The appointive officers shall be a clerk and a treasurer. No person shall hold more than one office at any one time.

Section 2 Terms of Office

- A. Readers shall be elected from the membership to serve a three year term. The term of office shall commence on the first Sunday in February following election.
- B. Trustees shall be elected according to the number of positions open, and shall be elected to serve for a period of three years, commencing immediately.
- C. The president shall be elected to serve for a period of one year commencing on January 1 following election.
- D. Executive officers shall be chosen by the Board from among their own number to serve for a period of one year.
- E. The clerk and treasurer shall be appointed for a period of one year. These officers may be reappointed for subsequent one-year terms.

Section 3 Eligibility

- A. To be eligible for elective office, a member shall have been an active member of this church for at least one year, and be a member of The Mother Church.
- B. Any member who has served as a board member for a period of two years or more shall not be eligible for re-election for at least three years following the completion of his or her term.
- C. Any member who has served a full term as First Reader in this church shall not be eligible to serve in that capacity again. Any member who has served a full term as Second Reader in this church shall not be eligible to serve in that capacity again. Three one-year periods shall be considered a "full term."
- D. A member who is not present at an election meeting shall be considered ineligible to serve unless that member has notified the clerk prior to the election meeting that he or she is willing to serve.

Section 4 Removal

Any officer, if found inadequate or unworthy, or if he or she fails to perform his or her duties as provided in these by-laws, may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the church members at a meeting called for that purpose.

Section 5 Absence

The continued absence of an officer of this church from his or her post of duty for three months shall constitute a vacancy unless special permission is given by the Board.

Section 6 Vacancies

A vacancy in an elective office shall be filled by a replacement for the unexpired term at the first regular membership meeting following the date of the vacancy, or at a special meeting called by the Board.

ARTICLE V DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1 Readers

The qualifications and duties of the Readers in this church shall be those specified in Article III of the *Manual of The Mother Church*.

Section 2 Board of Trustees

- A. Duties of the Board of Trustees:
1. Hold an organizational meeting within ten days after the election meeting for the purpose of electing a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson.
 2. Hold regular monthly meetings and such special meetings as may be deemed necessary.
 3. Be responsible for the activities of this church as outlined in Article I, Section 5, of these by-laws and in the standing rules, either directly or through committees.
 4. Make a report of the activities of the Board at each regular business meeting of the membership.
 5. Arrange for an annual audit of the church accounts, to be reported on at the next membership meeting.
 6. Review and set all salaries as needed. Salary changes are subject to the approval of the membership at the next regular business meeting.
 7. Review the membership roll annually. Any inactive member may be encouraged to renew active membership. If the member does not wish to become active again, he or she may be dropped from the membership by a unanimous vote of the Board.
 8. Appoint the following positions:
 - Clerk
 - Treasurer
 - Assistant Treasurer
 - Auditor
 - Sunday school officers and teachers
 - Reading Room Librarian
 - Assistant Reading Room Librarian
 - Substitute readers
 - Musicians
 - Chairmen and members of committees
 - Parliamentarian(s)
 - Other positions as may be required
 9. Make contracts and purchases; receive, collect, and disburse monies.

10. Receive gifts and bequests, purchase or otherwise acquire, hold in trust, keep the custody, possess, preserve, mortgage, sell, or otherwise dispose of personal property and such real estate as may be donated to the church for purposes other than church buildings.
11. Approve all requests for disbursement of church funds.
12. In emergencies, immediately make repairs or take other action to avoid or minimize financial loss or property damage to the church, subject to the confirmation for the record by the membership at the next regular membership meeting.
13. Have the authority to spend up to \$750 for any single church expense that has not been otherwise directed by the action of the membership by motion or through budgeting. If the membership has previously approved an expense by budget or by motion, any additional amounts for that expense must be approved by the members.

B. Restrictions on Board Authority:

1. Real property of this church shall be bought or sold only as directed by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership.
2. No monies of this church shall be diverted, donated, or expended for other than the proper expenses of this church, unless so authorized at a membership meeting.

C. Board Chairperson shall:

1. Preside at all board meetings.
2. Sign all official documents of the church as directed by the Board.
3. Preside at all church meetings in the absence of the president.

D. Vice Chairperson

The Vice Chairperson shall exercise the duties of the Chairperson in his or her absence.

Section 3 President

The president shall preside at all membership meetings and shall be conversant with the current parliamentary procedures as defined in Article VII, Meetings. He or she shall conduct the meetings according to the Order of Business established for this purpose and in accordance with the agenda provided by the board.

Section 4 Clerk

The clerk shall be the custodian of all records and documents of this church except those kept by the treasurer and the Reading Room librarian. The clerk shall perform the following duties:

- A. Keep a record of all board and membership meetings.
- B. Maintain an up-to-date list of all members with their names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.
- C. Prepare a list of members eligible for election and have it available for reference by the members one month prior to a regular election and one week prior to a special election.
- D. Notify members of membership meetings by mail or email, including the agenda for the meetings. Notification, as used in these by-laws, is mail or email in accordance with each member's stated preference.
- E. At the direction of the Board:
 - 1. Respond to all correspondence directed to this church.
 - 2. Prepare all desk announcements.
 - 3. Conduct the election of the new board chairperson.
 - 4. Maintain an individual record of each member's attendance at business meetings of this church.

Section 5 Treasurer

- A. Receive and deposit all church monies in the name of the church in a depository in Vancouver designated by the Board.
- B. Prepare and present a complete itemized report of all receipts and disbursements quarterly and annually to the church membership and a similar report, monthly, to the Board.
- C. Provide a surety bond as the Board may direct. The premium shall be paid by this church.
- D. Draw all checks on the bank account of this church, which must be signed by any two of the following officers:
 1. Chairman of the Board
 2. Vice chairperson of the Board
 3. President
 4. Treasurer

In the absence of the treasurer, the assistant treasurer shall perform these duties and shall assist the treasurer as needed.

ARTICLE VI ELECTIONS

Section 1 Electioneering

The members of this church shall neither outline, electioneer, seek office, nor influence votes before or at elections, but shall strive to develop a constant dependence on God for wisdom and guidance.

Section 2 Election Requirements

- A. Each elective office shall be filled on a separate ballot.
- B. A simple majority of votes cast shall be sufficient to elect all elective officers.
- C. Voting shall be by written ballot.

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- D. Whenever the president reads the candidates eligible for a ballot, the names shall be in alphabetical order, with no mention of the number of votes received by any candidate.

Section 3 Election Procedure

The detailed election procedure shall be as stated in the Standing Rules and shall be consistent with the Election Requirements in this article.

ARTICLE VII MEETINGS

The business and board meetings of this church shall be conducted according to the rules and procedures as described in Democratic Rules of Order by Fred Francis and Peg Francis, to the extent that they are consistent with the church by-laws and standing rules."

Section 1 Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings shall be held in January, April, July, and October, on the Tuesday following the second Sunday. The January meeting shall be designated as the annual meeting.

Section 2 Election Meetings

An election meeting shall be held annually in November, the date to be determined by the Board. All elective offices shall be voted on at this meeting. No other business shall be transacted. At all election meetings for readers, Article III, Section 6, of the *Manual of The Mother Church* shall be read aloud prior to the start of voting.

Section 3 Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called at any time by the authority of the Board or on the signed request of five members of this church in good standing. This request shall be filed with the clerk and shall specify the purpose of the meeting.

Section 4 Notices

The clerk shall send notification to each member at least two weeks prior to all meetings, giving the time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Announcements regarding membership meetings shall be read from the desk at least one Sunday and one Wednesday prior to such meeting.

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Section 5 Quorum

One-fourth of the membership shall constitute a quorum. A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of its business.

Section 6 Majority Vote

A simple majority of those present and voting shall be necessary to pass ordinary business items presented to the members. Votes on financial matters shall be by written ballot if requested by any member.

ARTICLE VIII AMENDMENTS

Section 1 Bylaws

These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any authorized meeting, provided that each member received notification of the proposed amendment(s) at least two weeks prior to such meeting. Amendments and the reason therefore may be considered upon written request presented to the Board by three members of this church who are in good standing. The proposed amendment(s) themselves may be amended at the meeting by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting. These by-laws shall take effect upon adoption and shall supersede all former by-laws.

Section 2 Standing Rules

The standing rules of this church may be changed by a simple majority vote of the members present and voting at any authorized meeting at which there is a quorum. No pre-meeting notification is required.

ARTICLE IX BY-LAW REVIEW

These by-laws shall be reviewed on a regular basis at the discretion of the Board.

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ARTICLE X DISSOLUTION

Members shall receive notification by mail or email at least two weeks in advance of the meeting at which dissolution is to be discussed. In the event of a vote by two-thirds of the total membership to dissolve, all assets and funds of First Church of Christ, Scientist of Vancouver, Washington, after payment of its indebtedness, shall be transferred, conveyed, and distributed to The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts, to a branch church or society, to a Christian Science College Organization, and/or to a Christian Science nursing facility. The proportion of assets to be distributed to any of the above is to be determined by a majority of the members at the time of dissolution.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The following shall be the Order of Business at all regular meetings of this church:

1. Hymn
2. Readings from the *Bible*, and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, or from other works by the same author; silent prayer, and the audible repetition of a selected prayer
3. Confirmation of quorum
4. Reading of previous minutes
5. Clerk's report and correspondence
6. Treasurer's report
7. Auditor's report (required at Annual Meeting)
8. Board of Trustees' report
9. Reading Room report
10. Committee reports
11. Unfinished business
12. New business
13. Welfare of the church
14. Adjournment, preceded by the repetition in unison of the "scientific statement of being", page 468; one of the Tenets, page 497; or the definition of Church, page 583; all from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy.

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