

# THE DESIGN FOR THE CENTRAL AREA OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE SOUTHWEST

### PREAMBLE

#### 1. As members of the Christian Church

We confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and proclaim Christ Lord and Savior of the world. In Christ's name and by Christ's grace we accept our mission of witness and service to all people. We rejoice in God, maker of heaven and earth, and in the covenant of love which binds us to God and one another. Through baptism into Christ we enter into newness of life and are made one with the whole people of God. In the communion of the Holy Spirit we are joined together in discipleship and in obedience to Christ. At the table of the Lord we celebrate with thanksgiving the saving acts and presence of Christ. Within the universal church we receive the gift of ministry and the light of scripture.

In the bonds of Christian faith we yield ourselves to God that we may serve the One whose reign has no end. Blessing, glory and honor be to God forever. Amen.

2. To enable the congregations of the Central Area to fulfill their ministries and function in harmony with other manifestations of the church; and to fulfill the purposes for which the Area was formed and incorporated, we commit ourselves to one another in adopting this Design.

### I. NAME AND RELATIONSHIPS

3. The name shall be The Central Area of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest, hereinafter referred to as the Central Area or Area.

4. As the name reflects, the Central Area is a part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest, hereinafter referred to as the Region.

5. Through the Region the Area relates to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, hereinafter referred to as the General church.

### II. MISSION

6. The mission of the Central Area of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest Region is to link congregations in partnership, sharing in the life, hope, and message of Jesus Christ. (This partnership involves participation in congregational development, intercongregational programming and outreach ministries).

### III. PURPOSES

7. The purposes for which the Central Area was incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Texas, charter number 01169012-01, are:

- A. To proclaim and further the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- B. To nurture and enhance member congregations and their pastors through Christian fellowship, worship, leader development, cooperative programs and pastoral services.
- C. To witness to our unity in Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) within the Area.
- D. To challenge and provide opportunities for member congregations to engage in mission.
- E. To provide an Area Minister, an organizational structure, and a Retreat Center to facilitate these purposes.
- F. To acquire, use, encumber, and dispose of real and personal property of all kinds for such purposes and considerations deemed appropriate by its directors.

#### IV. MEMBERSHIP

8. The Central Area shall include all Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregations within an area bounded by the counties of:

Wilbarger, Wichita, Clay and Montague on the north; Montague, Jack, Young, Stephens, Erath, Hamilton, and Lampasas on the east; Lampasas, San Saba, Mason, Kimble, Sutton, and Crockett on the south; Crockett, Reagan, Midland, Martin, Howard, Scurry, Fisher, Jones, Haskell, Knox, and Foard on the west; and in any future territory included due to changes in Area boundary lines.

9. The member congregations of the Central Area shall be affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in its Regional and General manifestations.

#### V. AREA ASSEMBLY

10. The Area shall have at least one Assembly each year at such time and place as determined by the Area Council. Other meetings of the Assembly may be called by the Area Moderator or at the request of five (5) member congregations. Congregations must be given thirty (30) days written notice of other Assemblies.

11. Area Assemblies shall be for the purpose of inspiration and fellowship; conducting the business of the Area; and for such other purposes as determined by the Assembly Program Planning committee. Area Officers and Committee chairpersons shall be elected and an Area budget adopted at the Assembly each year.

12. All members of Area congregations may attend and participate in Area Assemblies, but voting privileges shall be restricted to the following:

- A. All Disciples of Christ ministers who have standing and are living and/or serving within the Central Area;

B. All commissioned church workers and full-time program staff serving Disciples of Christ congregations in the Central Area;

C. Lay representatives from all Disciples of Christ congregations in the Central Area on the following participating membership basis:

1-300 members: one representative

301-500 members: two representatives

501+ members: three representatives;

D. One additional lay representative for congregations without a minister;

E. Persons not included in one of the above categories who are members of the Area Council, Regional Council or General Board.

13. A quorum for Assembly business sessions shall consist of the voting representatives present. All business items, except amendments to the Articles of Incorporation or this Design, shall require a simple majority vote for approval.

14. Business items related to the purchase, sale, or encumbrance of property to be considered by the Assembly shall be distributed to the congregations at least sixty (60) days in advance of the Assembly.

15. All business sessions of the Assembly and its related bodies shall be governed by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order to the extent to which they are applicable and consistent with the Articles of Incorporation or this Design.

## VI. OFFICERS

16. The Area Assembly shall elect an Area Moderator, two Vice Moderators, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. These Area Officers, along with the Area Minister, shall serve as the legal representatives of the Area (corporate Board of Directors). The Area Officers shall hold corresponding positions on the corporate Board of Directors. The Area Officers shall also serve as the Area Executive Committee, serve as members of the Area Council, and provide general leadership for the Area.

17. Candidates for Area Officers shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee from among the participating membership of Central Area Disciples of Christ congregations and presented to the Assembly for election.

18. The Moderator, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected in odd numbered years and the two Vice Moderators in even numbered years. Area Officers shall begin their term on January 1 following their election. Officers may not serve more than two consecutive full terms in the same office.

19. In addition to the general responsibilities above, the Officers shall perform the following duties:

A. The Area Moderator shall preside at all meetings of the Area Assembly, Area Council, and Area Executive Committee; serve *ex officio* without vote on all Area Committees; and represent the Area on the Regional Council.

B. The First Vice Moderator shall preside at Area meetings and represent the Area on the Regional Council in the absence of the Moderator, and chair the Area Assembly Planning Committee. In the event the Moderator is unable to serve, the First Vice Moderator shall assume the position for the remainder of the unexpired term.

C. The Second Vice Moderator shall chair the Area Nominating Committee.

D. The Secretary shall record the minutes of the regular and called meetings of the Area Assembly, Area Council, Corporate Board, and Executive Committee.

E. The Treasurer shall serve as corporate Treasurer and oversee and audit the work of the Area Financial Secretary. The Area Office Secretary shall serve as the Area Financial Secretary, responsible for receiving and disbursing Area funds; keeping records of all funds received, held, and disbursed by the Area; and preparing financial reports for the meetings of the Area Assembly, Council, and Executive Committee.

#### VIII. AREA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

24. There shall be an Area Executive Committee composed of the (five) elected Area Officers. The Area Minister shall serve *ex officio* on the Executive Committee.

25. The Area Executive Committee and the Area Minister shall serve as the legal representatives (corporate Board of Directors) of the Area. As such they shall buy, sell, exchange, and otherwise acquire or dispose of the Area's real and personal property and securities and negotiate the legal affairs of the Area as authorized by the Area Assembly and in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation.

26. In addition to serving as legal representatives of the Area, the Area Executive Committee shall:

A. serve as the Area Personnel Committee;

B. serve as the Area Finance Committee;

C. provide counsel and advice to the Area Minister and Moderator;

D. provide for appropriate ways of fulfilling the functions of the Area Minister when that office is vacant.

27. The Area Executive Committee shall meet in conjunction with regular and called meetings of the Area Assembly and Council and at other times at the request of the Moderator or Area Minister.

## IX. COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

28. The on-going work of the Area shall be carried out through standing Committees of the Council.

29. Committee chairpersons shall be nominated by the Area Nominating Committee and elected by the Area Assembly. Committee members shall be selected by the Committee chairpersons in consultation with the Area Minister and Moderator. Committee chairpersons and members shall be selected with consideration given to Cluster representation and a balance of large and small congregations, laity and clergy, male and female, and minorities.

A. Committee Chairpersons, other than those who are Area Officers, shall be elected for two year terms and may serve no more than two consecutive full terms. Their term of office shall begin January 1 following their election.

B. Committee members (except for the Covenant Youth Committee) shall serve two-year terms and may not serve more than two consecutive full terms. Terms of all Committee members, except the members of the Covenant Youth Committee and its age-level councils, shall begin January 1.

30. The Area Council shall have, but not be limited to, the following standing Committees:

A. Assembly Planning Committee. The Assembly Planning Committee shall be composed of four to seven members representative of the churches and Clusters of the Area, plus the minister and one lay representative of the host church. The First Vice Moderator shall chair the Assembly Planning Committee.

The Assembly Planning Committee shall determine the time, place, theme, and costs of Area Assemblies; coordinate local arrangements with the host church; secure program leadership and/or coordinate program with Area Committees; and promote the Assemblies.

B. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of five to seven members, including at least one youth, representative of the churches and Clusters of the Area. The Second Vice Moderator shall chair the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee shall nominate to the Area Assembly the following:

- 1) The Officers of the Area;
- 2) The chairpersons of all Area Committees;

3) Area representatives to or board members of organizations such as Texas IMPACT, the Texas Conference of Churches and its Commissions, the Angelo State Campus Ministry, in which the Area has membership or is entitled to representation.

In addition, the Nominating committee shall nominate to the Council persons to fill Area officer and chairperson vacancies occurring between Assemblies.

C. Finance Committee. The Area Executive Committee shall perform the function of the Finance Committee.

In this role, the Area Executive Committee shall work with Area Committees and the Area Minister to develop biennial budgets for the Area; do mid-year assessments of Area finances and budget; promote Area financial needs and stewardship education among Area churches; develop policy for and authorize replacement of the Area-owned auto; develop policy for and oversee investment of permanent and/or non-designated Area funds; and annually review and update the Area's insurance needs and coverage.

D. Christian Education and Leader Development Committee. The Christian Education and Leader Development Committee shall be composed of five to seven members representative of the churches and Clusters of the Area.

The Christian Education and Leadership Development Committee shall plan and coordinate education and leadership development programs for the Area and services to congregations in the Area; and implement and coordinate Regional, General, and ecumenical education and leader development programs in the Area.

E. Covenant Youth Committee. The Covenant Youth Committee shall be composed of a chairperson nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Assembly; the chairperson and one additional adult representative of the New Beginnings, Junior, Chi Rho, and CYF age-level councils.

The chairperson's term shall be the same as other Area Committee chairpersons.

The Covenant Youth Committee shall receive input from and establish communication links with local congregations related to youth ministry; coordinate calendar and program for Area youth ministry events; establish philosophy, policy, procedures, age levels, and costs and budgets for all Area youth ministry programs including camps and conferences; develop themes and coordinate development of curriculum for Area camps and conferences; recruit and train directors and counselors for Area camps and conferences; promote and publicize Area youth events; promote Cluster, Area, Regional, General, and ecumenical youth events in the Area.

The Covenant Youth Committee shall carry out its work through four age-level councils. The chairpersons of the four age-level councils shall be recommended by the respective age-level councils and approved by the chairperson of the Covenant Youth Committee in consultation with the Area Minister and Moderator. Adult members of the four age-level councils shall be approved by the Covenant Youth Committee in consultation with the

Area Minister. Chairpersons and members shall serve two-year, June or July to June or July terms, and may serve no more than two successive full terms.

1. CYF Youth Ministry Council. The CYF Youth Ministry Council shall be composed of three to five adults and eight to twelve youth representatives of the churches and Clusters of the Area with at least two youth and one adult from each Cluster. The youth members of the CYF Youth Ministry Council shall be nominated by their churches and elected by their peers through a process established by the CYF Youth Ministry Council. Youth shall serve one year terms beginning with the CYF Youth Leadership Seminar following their election. Youth may be eligible for a second one-year term. In as much as possible, one half of the youth members shall be new each year.

The CYF Youth Ministry Council shall plan, lead, and coordinate Area high school age youth events; develop CYF Conference curricula to implement the themes established by the Covenant Youth Committee; develop Area programs and events for youth and adult leader development; promote Area, Regional, and General youth programs and events in the Area; participate in the Regional Youth Leadership Seminar; promote church vocations among Area high school youth; encourage and coordinate Cluster CYF events; and resource and consult with local churches regarding CYF program.

2. Chi Rho Youth Ministry Council. The Chi Rho Youth Ministry Council shall be composed of four to six adults representative of the churches, Cluster, and Chi Rho programs of the Area.

The Chi Rho Youth Ministry Council shall plan, lead, and coordinate Area junior high programs and events; develop Chi Rho Camp curricula to implement themes established by the Covenant Youth Committee; encourage and resource Cluster Chi Rho events; develop Area programs for training and supporting Chi Rho sponsors; and resource and consult with local churches regarding Chi Rho program.

3. Junior Youth Ministry Council. The Junior Youth Ministry Council shall be composed of four to six adults representative of the churches, Clusters, and Junior programs of the Area.

The Junior Youth Ministry Council shall plan, lead, and coordinate Area programs and events for older-elementary age youth; develop Junior Camp curricula to implement the themes established by the Covenant Youth Committee; encourage and resource Cluster JYF events; develop Area programs for training and supporting JYF sponsors; and resource and consult with local churches regarding Junior age program.

4. New Beginnings Youth Ministry Council. The New Beginnings Youth Ministry Council shall be composed of four to six adults representative of the churches, Clusters, and New Beginnings age programs of the Area. The New Beginnings Youth Ministry Council shall plan, lead, and coordinate Area programs and events for 2nd and 3rd grade youth; develop New Beginnings camp curricula to

implement the themes established by the Covenant Youth Committee; encourage and resource Cluster New Beginnings events; develop Area programs for training and supporting New Beginnings sponsors; and resource and consult with local churches regarding New Beginnings age program.

F. Church in Society Committee. The Church in Society Committee shall be composed of four to seven members representative of the churches and Clusters of the Area, plus the Area representatives to Texas IMPACT and the Texas Council of Churches. The Church in Society Committee shall plan and coordinate social awareness and social action projects within the Area; coordinate and promote Regional, General, and ecumenical social awareness and action programs among Area churches; interpret and promote the Week of Compassion and Reconciliation among Area churches; establish policy for, promote development of, and act on requests for funding from Reconciliation projects in the Area; and promote the work of and participation in Texas IMPACT and projects of the Texas Council of Churches.

The Church in Society Committee shall plan and coordinate Camp Friendship and Area Mission projects.

G. Church Growth Committee. The Church Growth Committee shall be composed of five to seven members representative of the churches and Clusters of the Area. The Church Growth Committee shall promote evangelism, church growth, and congregational revitalization within the Area; study and respond to the need for new church development and church revitalization in the Area; plan, implement, and coordinate church growth and revitalization programs, events, and consultations in the Area; and implement and coordinate Regional, General, and ecumenical church growth and revitalization programs in the Area.

H. Lake Brownwood Christian Retreat. The Lake Brownwood Christian Retreat Board shall function according to their charter and by-laws. The Lake Brownwood Christian Retreat President will serve as an ex officio member of the Area Council.

I. Committee on the Ministry. The Committee on the Ministry shall be composed of five to seven members representative of the churches, ministers, and Clusters of the Area, plus persons from the Area serving at-large on the Regional Committee on the Ministry. The Committee on the Ministry shall implement the responsibilities assigned to the Area under the Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest, including: licensing of lay and student ministers; planning and providing for continuing education and spiritual renewal programs and events for Area clergy and their families; promoting Regional, General, and ecumenical ministry programs and events; promoting collegiality and cluster fellowship/support groups and events within the Area. The chairperson of the Area Committee on the Ministry shall serve on the Regional Committee on the Ministry.

J. Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee shall be composed of the members of the Area Executive Committee, except when calling or dismissing the Area Minister. In that event, the Regional Minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the

Southwest or his/her designee shall be added to the Personnel Committee. The Area Personnel Committee shall counsel and advise the Area Minister; evaluate the performance of the Area Minister and office staff; develop job descriptions and performance standards for the Area Minister and office staff; recommend salary and benefits packages for the Area Minister and office staff; recommend and/or approve continuing education and sabbatical programs for the Area Minister; support the Area Minister and office staff; recommend to the Area Assembly hiring or dismissal of an Area Minister; give counsel and consent of the Area Minister for hiring or dismissing the office staff.

31. The Area Council shall appoint such Task Forces, Committees and Boards as may be necessary from time to time to perform specific, short-term duties not assigned to the standing Committees. These Task Forces, Committees and Boards shall be disbanded upon completion of their assigned duties.

#### X. AREA MINISTER

32. There shall be an Area Minister, elected by the Area Assembly upon recommendation of the Area Personnel Committee.

33. When a vacancy occurs in that office the Area Personnel Committee, expanded to include a representative of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest, shall conduct a church-wide search for an Area Minister. Names of candidates shall be secured from the General Minister and President and the Regional Minister and through the Disciples relocation system. Candidates shall be ordained ministers with good standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Area Minister shall be called for an indefinite term, with a mutual ninety (90) day written notice for termination. Salary and benefits of call shall be negotiated by the Personnel Committee within established budgetary and policy guidelines.

34. The office of Area Minister shall be both pastoral and administrative. In the fulfillment of these duties the Area Minister shall:

A. be delegated administrative responsibility and be accountable to the Area Council for all programs, functions, and relationships of the Central Area;

B. serve ex officio on the Area Executive Committee, Area Council and all Area Committees;

C. be a member of the Area's corporate Board of Directors;

D. be pastor to all ministers and their families and all congregations and constituencies in the Central Area;

E. provide counsel, support and encouragement, assistance, and resourcing to congregations and ministers relative to programming, organizational function, minister-congregation relationships, congregational conflict, pulpit supply, and the ministerial search and relocation process;

F. promote and represent the covenantal relationship between Central Area churches and ministers and work for harmony, cooperation, and collegiality among them;

G. serve as a member of the staff of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest and carry such responsibilities on behalf of the Region as may be assigned;

H. serve as liaison for Area congregations and ministers seeking counsel, assistance, or redress from the Regional or General manifestations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);

I. represent and/or serve as liaison to Area and State ecumenical agencies and organizations of which the Area is a member, for which the Area is entitled to such representation, or to which liaison or representation may be desired.

## XI. CLUSTERS

35. The Area shall be divided into the following geographical Clusters;

A. Big Country Cluster. The Big Country Cluster shall be composed of congregations in Knox, Haskell, Throckmorton, Fisher, Jones, Shackelford, Stephens, Nolan, Taylor, Callahan, Eastland, Erath, Coleman, Brown, Comanche, Hamilton, San Saba, Mills, and Lampasas counties.

B. Plateau Cluster. The Plateau Cluster shall be composed of congregations in Scurry, Martin, Howard, Mitchell, Midland, Glasscock, Sterling, and Reagan counties.

C. Whirlwind Cluster. The Whirlwind Cluster shall be composed of congregations in Foard, Wilbarger, Wichita, Clay, Baylor, Archer, Montague, Young, and Jack counties.

D. Concho Cluster. The Concho Cluster shall be composed of congregations in Coke, Runnels, Irion, Tom Green, Concho, McCulloch, Crockett, Schleicher, Menard, Mason, Sutton, and Kimble counties.

36. The churches and ministers of each Cluster shall meet periodically--as determined by the Clusters--for fellowship, collegiality, mutual support and encouragement, and sharing. In addition, Area Constituency Groups and age-level youth ministry committees may develop Cluster structures and programs. Clusters may also serve as a base for interpretation and delivery of Area, Regional, and General church programs.

37. Each Cluster shall have one at-large representative on the Area Council and at least one representative on each of the Committees, sub-committees, and task forces of the Area.

## XII. CONSTITUENCY GROUPS

38. The Area may include, but not be limited to, the following Constituency Groups:

A. Christian Men's Fellowship or Disciples Men

B. Christian Women's Fellowship or Disciples Women

C. Young Adult Fellowship

D. Mature Adult Fellowship

39. These Constituency Groups shall provide leadership and structure for persons identified with them to have opportunity for fellowship, service, and spiritual growth; provide counsel and assistance to local church constituency group programs; and provide Area liaison and representation to and interpretation of the work and programs of Regional and General constituency groups.

40. These Constituency Groups may develop their own Area and Cluster programs and elect their own officers.

41. The Presidents (or equivalent thereof) of the Constituency Groups shall serve on the Area Council.

42. The President (or equivalent thereof) or designated representative(s) of the Area Constituency Groups shall relate to and serve on the corresponding Constituency Groups of the Region.

### XIII. AMENDMENTS

43. This Design may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the representatives present and voting at a duly scheduled or called Area Assembly providing written notice of the proposed amendment(s) has been mailed to all Area congregations at least sixty (60) days in advance of said Assembly.

44. Proposed amendments may be submitted by any Area congregation, Area Committee or Constituency Group, or the Area Council.

### XIV. IMPLEMENTATION

45. This document shall become effective on January 1, 1996 following amendment on October 7, 1995 upon its approval by the Area Assembly.

Amended on October 7, 1995 to take effect on January 1, 1996.

Central Area Moderator - Steve Brower \_\_\_\_\_

Central Area Secretary - Jane Hurley \_\_\_\_\_