

FCM

Constitution

2011

We respond to the sacred Call by empowering and nurturing those inspired for expansive ministries in the world.



FCM

Circle of Directors

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Document Revision History

Document History		
v2011.1	Adopted June 13, 2011	<p>Modification to Article III <i>“III. Membership</i></p> <p><i>All who desire to participate in the ideals and goals of the Federation, as articulated in the Preamble and Articles I and II, whose individual and organizational lives reflect this willingness are eligible for membership.</i></p> <p><i>The By Laws of FCM will establish norms of membership for individuals, faith communities, churches, groups and organizations. These norms will encourage the building of FCM into an effective convention of individuals, faith communities, churches and organizations to carry out the purposes of our organization, a new paradigm of ecclesia as outlined in the Preamble and Articles I and II.”</i></p> <p>Modification to Article V § D <i>“D. In a meeting of the general membership at an Annual Assembly, the members in attendance make up a quorum. In other meetings, such as the Circle of Directors, a simple majority of those who are authorized to participate in the meeting make up a quorum for that meeting.”</i></p> <p>Modification to Article VI <i>“VI. Recognition of Ministerial Charisms The Federation of Christian Ministries enters into prayerful discernment of the spiritual gifts and charisms of its members. Those charisms are recognized by FCM through procedures and categories specified in the By Laws of the organization.”</i></p>

CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

Preamble

We are women and men responding to that same Spirit that was in Jesus Christ, the Spirit of a new Pentecost. We are committed to embodying that Spirit in a rich diversity of ministries that will lead to the renewal and transformation of the communities we serve. Our vision reflects the mutuality and partnership lived by Jesus. His Gospel of wholehearted love of God and neighbor rejects violence toward and domination of one person by another. We respect and reverence each person as an image of God. As daughters and sons of Holy Wisdom, we affirm the cosmic vision of the interdependence and interconnection of all reality. Our new paradigm, partnership in ministry for the twenty-first century, urges us to work for justice, equality, and peace in our Earth community as together we worship and serve each other.

Article I. Name

The name of our organization is the Federation of Christian Ministries, Incorporated, formerly known as Fellowship of Christian Ministries and prior to that as Society of Priests for a Free Ministry. Popularly known as FCM, our name reflects a union of many communities and individuals working in a variety of ministries. Our name derives from a critical understanding of the scriptures which defines church through its goals: A Community which focuses on the unique relationships we build as we share our dreams and hopes, bind our wounds, heal our darkness, and give the gift of ourselves; A Ministry which embodies the fire of the Spirit's transforming power to serve humanity with compassion; A Witness which takes many different forms contemplative, prophetic, communal, healing, theological, playful as we respond to the Spirit each day; and A Worship which expresses the joys, sorrows, and longings of the community for Divinity's embrace, and leads us to live in intimate kinship with our universe.

Article II. Purpose

The purpose of our Federation is to worship God by proclaiming in word and deed the Good News of God's love and justice. We contribute experientially to an extensive, ongoing renewal of gospel ministry. We are a discipleship of equals, a unique witness to all women and men who seek equality. Originating in 1968 as the Society of Priests for a Free Ministry, we gave a voice to the thousands of Roman Catholic priests who resigned from the clergy, but who wanted to continue their ministries as married priests. Rooted in the tradition of universality and inclusiveness of the gospel message, we expanded the vision to include people from all religious traditions and to affirm women as equals and partners in ministry. We are a meeting ground for people of varying faith traditions and spiritualities. Within this community, we foster ecumenism and interfaith sharing which enriches all.

Our Federation recognizes and affirms the array of gifts the Spirit has given to its members. God, who created us in the divine image, has called every person to be a reflection of the Holy One. We are called to love with the Divine Heart. As members, we comfort, encourage, support, heal, challenge, and lead in many actions which reflect the warm companionship of God's presence. Our communities shelter people seeking a spiritual home. Responding to the needs of individuals and communities who call them, FCM certifies qualified women and men to function as ministers, preach the Gospel, preside at liturgies, design rituals, witness marriages,

conduct funerals, and provide pastoral and spiritual care. Our Federation proclaims God's love for everyone and invites everyone to belong, especially the alienated, rejected, and marginal members of society.

Like the early Christian communities, we believe that the people of God, whenever and wherever they gather, are church. Our Federation is a fresh expression of the original term ecclesia, a people in diaspora, caught between the already and the not yet. We are constant reminders that God is doing something new, yet continuing to inspire faith communities that reflect the traditions of the early church. We show by our structures, governing style, and actions a collegial model of equality that continues to struggle against sexism, racism, poverty, ageism, heterosexism, homophobia, clericalism, environmental destruction, nationalism, and all forms, beliefs, systems, and actions that divide and subjugate people. Our Federation is concerned about the ecology of our planet and all who live on it. All beings [human, animal, plants, sun, moon, stars] are planetary pilgrims on a sacred journey. In pursuit of these objectives, our Federation proposes to act in service to our Earth community to draw us closer together as God's family.

To achieve its mission FCM is committed to be:

- A. A community of love, equality, and justice inviting all people to the Eucharistic table.
- B. A Federation for all who are concerned with religious leadership and service, both inside and outside official structures. We celebrate the gifts of the people that God gives for the building of the community.
- C. A Renewal Movement shaped by Sacred Scripture and other ancient written and oral traditions which empower women and men to liberate one another for a full exercise of public ministry.
- D. A community of members engaged in ministry. Through peer accountability members uphold standards of conduct according to the norms of both our Federation and civil law. We certify and authorize members, both women and men, for religious ministry, according to the traditions of the community, and local and state requirements.
- E. A support system for existing and new basic faith communities, service groups, and movements. We provide a source of shared information and experience fostering the development of these groups.
- F. An assembly of pilgrims on a spiritual journey who offer a variety of experiences to people of diverse religious backgrounds. We want to open hearts, nurture souls, affirm unity, celebrate diversity, promote wholeness and holiness, critique patriarchal and authoritarian structures and systems, explore theological issues, and raise new questions and fresh ways of viewing our world.

Article III. Membership

Section 1. Individual Membership

All who desire to participate in the ideals and goals of the Federation, as articulated in the Preamble and Articles I and II, whose individual and organizational lives reflect this willingness are eligible for membership.

Section 2. FCM Chapters

Any nonprofit ministerial (service oriented) group of which a minimum of four members are also members of our Federation, may seek a nonprofit Tax Exempt status by becoming a Chapter of FCM.

Article IV. National Circle

Section 1. Circle of Directors

Leadership in our Federation is vested in the Circle of Directors. The Circle consists of nationally elected Chairperson(s), President(s), Representative(s)-at-large, regionally elected Vice Presidents, and appointed Secretary(s) and Treasurer(s). The Circle manages and directs the affairs of our Corporation and has the powers specified in the laws of the United States and this Constitution necessary to carry out the purposes of FCM. The Circle is responsible for determining policy, approving annual budgets, establishing standing and special-purpose committees and setting annual goals. Officers and committee chairs will give annual reports on goals met or not met. The Circle approves proposed changes to FCM Bylaws and organizational structures such as realignment of or additions to geographic regions and is accountable to the membership at large.

Section 2. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the National Circle consists of the offices of Chairperson(s), President(s), Secretary(s), and Treasurer(s). Teams may staff these offices, each office having two full votes in elective matters.

Article V. Voting

- A. A simple majority of the votes cast carries any motion by members or officers present unless otherwise specified by this Constitution or Bylaws.
- B. No proxy or absentee vote is valid for any general meeting.
- C. Voting may be by acclamation in any meeting with a quorum present, except where otherwise specified, or else in writing.
- D. In a meeting of the general membership at an Annual Assembly, the members in attendance make up a quorum. In other meetings, such as the Circle of Directors, a simple majority of those who are authorized to participate in the meeting make up a quorum for that meeting.

Article VI. Recognition of Ministerial Charisms

The Federation of Christian Ministries enters into prayerful discernment of the spiritual gifts and charisms of its members. Those charisms are recognized by FCM through procedures and categories specified in the Bylaws of the organization.

Article VII. Amendments

A simple majority of the members may amend this Constitution voting through a ballot mailed to the general membership provided:

The proposal to amend has been filed by a member of the Federation with the Secretary(s) at least one month prior to a meeting of the Circle of Directors,

The member, when filing the proposed amendment, has presented the signature of five members favoring such an amendment.

A majority of the Circle of Directors, at a formal meeting, has approved the amendment. Voting on amendments will be open or secret by written ballot prepared and mailed to the general membership by the Secretary(s).

Article VIII. Dissolution

Upon dissolution of our Federation, the Executive Committee, in consultation with the Circle of Directors will, after paying all of the liabilities of the organization, dispose of all the assets of our Federation to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes, that will qualify for exemption under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or corresponding provisions of any future Internal Revenue Law).