



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

Official Actions of the 2023 World Conference

WCR 1321 Process for Election of Graceland University Board of Trustees (adopted April 22, 2023)

Whereas, The World Conference, under provisions of the Articles of Incorporation of Graceland University, currently elects seven members of the Graceland University Board of Trustees; and

Whereas, The function of the Board of Trustees has evolved such that each trustee has a significant functional responsibility rather than only being supportive and, hence, the selection of trustees should be based on an awareness of the particular areas of expertise and skills needed on the board as well as a thorough understanding of the qualifications and the personal commitment of prospective trustees; and

Whereas, The Corporate Body (First Presidency, Presiding Bishopric, and president of the Council of Twelve) is in ongoing conversation with the Graceland University Board of Trustees regarding the aforementioned needs; and

Whereas, The World Conference normally meets only once every three years; and

Whereas, The World Conference dates are subject to change for a variety of reasons; and

Whereas, The representatives on various boards and bodies of all other church affiliates where applicable are elected by the Corporate Body on behalf of the church; and

Whereas, The Corporate Body has the authority to recommend possible changes to the Graceland University Articles of Incorporation, but believes the support of the World Conference of any such recommendations is important because of the longstanding involvement of the conference in the process of electing some of the Graceland University trustees; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the World Conference gives its support to submitting a recommendation to the Graceland University Corporate Body (First Presidency, Presiding Bishopric, and president of the Council of Twelve) and Board of Trustees that the Graceland University Articles of Incorporation be amended to specify that the trustees currently elected by the World Conference be elected by the Corporate Body; and be it further

Resolved, That since the Graceland University Articles of Incorporation currently allow the Corporate Body to act on behalf of the World Conference regarding the election of the Board of Trustees, WCR 1278 is hereby rescinded.

Letter of Counsel about World Church Leaders

On April 23, 2023, the Councils, Quorums, Orders, Mass Meetings, and Caucuses indicated they had given consideration to the calls in the Letter of Counsel about World Church Leaders and that all had been approved by substantial majorities.

The calls for Ronald D. Harmon Jr. called to the office of bishop and be the presiding bishop as a member of the Presiding Bishopric; Angela Alt. Ramirez de Hernandez and Shandra Karine Newcom are called to serve as apostles and members of the Council of Twelve Apostles; and for Williem F. van Klinken and Carla K. Long to serve as counselors to the Presiding Bishop and members of the Presiding Bishopric.

WCR 1322 Amendment to Community of Christ Bylaws—Electronic Meetings (adopted April 24, 2023)

Article IV Section 6. Electronic Conferences and Meetings

All organized units of Community of Christ may hold conferences and meetings electronically if such is determined to be the most suitable method within a given context. Electronic conferences and meetings must be approved by appropriate next-level supervisory administrators and must be in harmony with requirements unique to each body (i.e., World Conference, Mission Center Conference, Congregation Conference, etc.) detailed elsewhere in these bylaws.

For the purposes of this section, an electronic conference or meeting includes any conference or meeting in which some or all members participate by virtual or other electronic means.

WCR 1323 Amendment to Community of Christ Bylaws – Organization of Additional Jurisdictional Units (adopted April 24, 2023)

Article VIII Organization of additional jurisdictional units.

As “the leading interpreters and teachers of the laws” (WCR 386), the First Presidency has the authority to organize additional forms of organizational units not currently foreseen. Such units may be based on national, other physical boundaries, or on no such geographical designations.

WCR 1324 Resolution on Baptism and Membership (adopted April 24 2023)

Whereas, Community of Christ’s Sharing in Community of Christ, 4th Edition, 2018 states that “Christ’s Mission is our Mission” and calls the church to “Invite People to Christ”; and Whereas, Growth in discipleship is a lifelong journey in response to God’s grace, which has led “...some people already committed to Jesus Christ through Christian baptism to further focus their response through church membership” (Doctrine and Covenants 164:2b); and

Whereas, Many of these committed Christians embrace their previous baptism as the first step on their journey as a disciple of Christ; and

Whereas, While policy changes from 2011 affirm some previous baptisms, the majority of the world’s Christians, having been baptized before the age of eight, continue to be excluded from Community of Christ membership without rebaptism, (Baptism, Confirmation, and Church Membership Policy, effective 1 October, 2011 and revised 14 February, 2012); and

Whereas, As expressed by the Theology Formation Team in its report to the 2016 World Conference on WCR 1301, Doctrine and Covenants 164 expanded the church’s understanding of baptism by reminding us that “the redemptive action of God in Christ—while uniquely and authoritatively expressed through the church—is not confined solely to the church” (164:2a); and

Whereas, We invite all to participate in the Lord’s Supper “in the love and peace of Jesus Christ” regardless of “different or added understandings within their faith traditions” (Invitation to Communion, 2019); and

Whereas, Our current practice of welcoming all Christians to the Lord’s Table (Communion) while denying the validity of baptisms prior to the age of eight is theologically incongruent and diminishes our affirmation of the Spirit of God present in other Christian faith traditions; and

Whereas, Our Enduring Principle of Continuing Revelation calls us to “assess past instruction in the light of new knowledge” and to “see sacraments not as rigid forms but as vehicles of the Spirit” (Theology Formation Team report to the 2016 World Conference on WCR 1301); therefore, be it

Resolved, That the World Conference request the president of the church to give additional prayer and study seeking divine guidance on persons who were baptized before the age of eight becoming members of Community of Christ via confirmation after having attained the age of eight.

World Church Finance Board

On April 24, 2023 the following persons were elected to a six-year term to the World Church Finance Board ending 2028.

Janelle S. Anders
S. Mark Barnes
Cara Borkowski
Denise Fears
David Harrison
Richard T. Higdon

Garland Land
Debora de Mejia
Robert E. (Bob)
Piepergerdes
David Siddall
Mark Swanson

Mariteragi Tamatoa
Joel Trinkle
Thomas Webber
Sam Zokar Zota Jr

1325 Resolution on The Climate Emergency (adopted April 25, 2023)

Whereas, Scientists have made it clear that humanity is facing a global climate emergency; and

Whereas, 1,873 jurisdictions in 33 countries have made climate emergency declarations (as of 4th February 2021); and

Whereas, The United Nations has called for governments, companies, and individuals to take action to prevent global warming reaching 1.5 degrees centigrade (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels; and

Whereas, People are showing increased concern over climate change through demonstrations, actions, and strikes; and

Whereas, The Earth Stewardship Team was established as a standing committee by World Conference action in 1992 to focus on issues of environment and development and to give guidance to the church; and

Whereas, Doctrine and Covenants Section 163:4b states “The earth, lovingly created as an environment for life to flourish, shudders in distress because creation’s natural and living systems are becoming exhausted from carrying the burden of human greed and conflict. Humankind must awaken from its illusion of independence and unrestrained consumption without lasting consequences.”; therefore, be it

Resolved, That Community of Christ join with others in declaring a climate emergency; and be it further

Resolved, That administrative representatives at every jurisdictional level (world, mission centre, and congregation) are encouraged to take responsibility for reducing carbon emissions resulting from church activities and encourage individuals to do the same; consider the impact of climate change on the environment when reviewing policies and strategies; and support those organisations and community groups that peaceably raise awareness of climate change and/or peaceably take action to limit global warming; and be it further

Resolved, That resources be developed by the Earth Stewardship Team to assist leaders and individuals in identifying ways to reduce carbon emissions.

Sustaining of World Church Leaders

On April 26, 2023 the following leaders were sustained.

First Presidency

Stephen M. Veazey, K. Scott Murphy, Stassi D. Cramm

Presiding Bishopric

Ronald D. Harmon, Jr., Carla K. Long, Willem F. van Klinken

Council of Twelve Apostles

Mareva M. Arnaud Tchong, president

Richard C.N. James, secretary

Bunda C. Chibwe

Janné C. Grover

Robin K. Linkhart

Lachlan E. Mackay

Catherine C. Mambwe

Carlos Enrique Mejia

Shandra Karine Newcom

David M. Nii

Angela Alt. Ramirez de Hernandez

Arthur E. Smith

Presidents of Seventy

Karin F. Peter, senior president

Adam R. Wade, secretary

John F. Glaser

Larry R. McGuire

Humberto Rosario del Rosario

Joelle Wight

Joey Williams

Presiding Evangelist

Jane M. Gardner

High Priests Quorum Presidency

David N. Anderson, Jennifer Killpack, Mbenga Urbain

Standing High Council

David M. Byrn

Mark D. Dixon

Eva M. Erickson

Gwendolyn E. Hawks-Blue

Lucy N. Ibanga

Issac Bennet Joshua

Sharon M. Kirkpatrick

Vincent Lewis

Ronald Alexander Viera López

Marilee A. Martens

Warwick (Rick) Sarre

Joan L. Thompson

World Church Secretary

Susan K. Naylor

Assignments of the Presidents of Seventy 2023-2025

John F. Glaser—Caribbean, Mexico/Texas and Canada Quorum and Hispanic Center for Formation Ministries (Apostles: Angela Ramirez and Art Smith)

Larry M. McGuire—Southern USA Quorum, South Center Asia Quorum and Africa Quorum (Apostles: Bunda C. Chibwe, Catherine Mambwe, David Nii, and Art Smith)

Karin F. Peter, senior president—North Central and Western USA Quorum (Apostles: Robin Linkhart and Shandra Newcom)

Humberto Rosario del Rosario —Central and South America Quorum (Apostle: Carlos Mejia)

Adam R. Wade, secretary—PacifikAsia Quorum (Apostle: Mareva Arnaud Tchong)

Joelle Wight—Central and Northeast USA Quorum (Apostles: Janné Grover and Lach Mackay)

Joey Williams—Eurasia Quorum and Diaspora Groups (Apostle: Richard James)

Council of Twelve Assignments for 2023-2025

Bunda C. Chibwe

Central and West Africa Mission Field:

- Congo West Kinshasa Mission Center
- Ivory Coast and Togo Mission Center
- Kashobwe, Kilwa, and Pweto Mission Center
- Kipushi, Lubumbashi, Kasenga Mission Center
- Grand Kasai Mission Center
- Lualaba Mission Center
- Nigeria Mission Center
- Tanganika Mission Center

Janné C. Grover

Central USA Mission Field:

- Brush Creek USA Mission Center
- Central USA Mission Center
- Central Missouri USA Mission Center
- Far West USA Mission Center
- Gateway USA Mission Center
- Midlands USA Mission Center
- Mid-South USA Mission Center
- South Central States USA Mission Center
- Campus Ministries
- Temple Ministries Initiative

Richard C.N. James

Eurasia Mission Field:

- British Isles Mission Centre
- Western Europe Mission Centre
- Eurasia Mission Centre
- Mission Project with the Multi-Nations Team of Apostles
- Abolish Poverty Initiatives
- Secretary of the Council of Twelve Apostles

Robin K. Linkhart

North Central USA Mission Field:

- Cedar Valley-Nauvoo USA Mission Center
- Chicago USA Mission Center
- Headwaters USA Mission Center
- Inland West USA Mission Center
- Kentucky-Indiana USA Mission Center
- Lamoni Heartland USA Mission Center
- Prairie Bluffs USA Mission Center
- Seeker Ministries

Lachlan E. Mackay

Northeast USA Mission Field:

- Bountiful USA Mission Center
- Chesapeake Bay USA Mission Center
- Eastern Great Lakes USA Mission Center
- Michigan USA Mission Center
- Mid-Atlantic USA Mission Center
- New England USA Mission Center
- Western Ohio USA Mission Center
- Director of Historic Sites
- Church History and Sacred Story Ministries Team lead

Catherine C. Mambwe

West, South, and East Africa Mission Field:

- Liberia and Sierra Leone Mission Center
- Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa Mission Center
- Malawi Mission Center
- Kenya Mission Center

Carlos Enrique Mejia

Central and South America Mission Field:

- Central America Mission Center
- Brazil Mission Center
- Southern Cone of South America Mission Center
- Northwest South America Mission Center
- Mission Projects with Hispanic Ministries

Shandra K. Newcom

Western USA and Baja California Mexico Mission Field:

Arizona USA Mission Center
Greater Pacific Northwest USA Mission Center
Pacific Southwest International Mission Center
Rocky Mountain USA Mission Center
Sierra Pacific USA
SPECTACULAR and International Youth Forum
Sierra Pacific Mission Center President

David H. M. Nii

Southern USA Mission Field:

Alabama-Northwest Florida USA Mission Center
Ark-La-Tex USA Mission Center
Coastal Bend USA Mission Center
Florida USA Mission Center
Gulf USA Mission Center
Heart of Texas USA Mission Center
Oklahoma USA Mission Center
Rio Grande USA Mission Center
Southeast USA Mission Center
USA Apostles Team Lead

Angela Alt. Ramirez de Hernandez

Caribbean and Mexico-Texas Mission Field:

Caribbean Mission Centre
Dominican Republic Mission Center
Mexico-Texas Mission Center
Apostolic Ministry in Haiti
Mission Projects with Hispanic Ministries

Arthur E. Smith

Canada Mission Field, Haiti and South-Central Asia Mission Field:

Canada East Mission Centre
Canada West Mission Centre
Haiti Great North Mission Center
Haiti Great South Mission Center
Andhra Pradesh India Mission Center
Buriipadar India Mission Center
Chandragiri India Mission Center
Ganjam India Mission Center
Kenduguda India Mission Center
Nepal Mission Center
South India Green Valley Mission Center
Indigenous Peoples Ministry

Temple Ministries Initiative
Multinations Apostles Team Lead

Mareva M. Arnaud Tchong

Pacifikasia Mission Field:

Australia Mission Centre
East Asia Mission Area
French Polynesia Mission Centre
Pacific Island Mission Centre
Philippine Mission Centre
President of the Council of Twelve Apostles

Standing High Council

On April 25, 2023 the following members concluded their service on the Standing High Council.

Kent Bradford (2002-2023)
Dennis Clinefelter (1988-2023)
Scott Roberson (1988-2023)

The following high priests were then set apart to serve on the Standing High Council:

Issac Bennett Joshua, Uthamapalayam, Tamil Nadu
Vince Lewis, Des Moines, Iowa, USA
Ronald Viera Lopez, Santa Ba'rbara, Honduras

WCR 1326 Resolution on Racial Justice (adopted April 27, 2023)

Whereas, Racism is a system of inequality based on racial prejudice and the belief that one race is innately superior to all other races; and

Whereas, In the nations of the world, systemic race based prejudice and misuse of power have justified the conquest, enslavement, abuse, disenfranchisement of and discrimination against those with more vulnerable cultures; and

Whereas, For many years, European empires used racism to justify subjugation, enslavement, dehumanization and/or appropriation of the lands and belongings of indigenous people in the Americas, Asia and Africa; and

Whereas, The myth of European superiority, also known as White Supremacy, persists in much of American life and culture and in the life and cultures of many Western nations today; and

Whereas, Non-Europeans who came, and those who are still coming, to the Western nations—either by choice or by force—encountered and continue to encounter racism; and

Whereas, Western nations have outlawed racial discrimination, yet social, economic, and government institutions still discriminate, intentionally and unintentionally, and restrict opportunities for many people of color to be affirmed for their human worth and God's gifts within them; and

Whereas, A system designed to prefer one segment of the population over another cannot lead to a sustainable, peaceful, and just society for all; and

Whereas, The undesirable fruits of racism are prejudice, bigotry, fear, discrimination, humiliation, alienation and division among all people, and reduced opportunities and generational poverty for many Africans, African-Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, Asians, Native peoples, and Pacific Islanders, whose hopes are deferred and rights are denied; and

Whereas, Christian teaching affirms that Christ's peace has broken down the dividing wall and hostility between us, so that Christ may create one humanity; and scripture exhorts us to lead a life with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, while speaking the truth in love and promoting the body's growth in building itself up in love [Ephesians 2:14–15, 4:1–3, 15–16];

Resolved, Because Jesus has declared God's love for all the world and all creation, Community of Christ acknowledges that racism is a sin and be it further

Resolved, That Community of Christ now calls for a renewed commitment both in the church and in national cultures to eliminate institutional racism and to affirm unequivocally that by biblical and theological precept, by the law of the church, by our mission and Enduring Principles, by World Conference pronouncement, and by leadership expressions, the aim of Community of Christ is nothing less than an inclusive church in an inclusive society; and be it further

Resolved, That Community of Christ calls upon all its members, congregations, and jurisdictions to perform and share those faithful deeds of prayer, study, discernment, worship, love, justice, and nonviolent advocacy—by group and individual actions in both the church, community and nations—which will bring into reality a just, equitable and peaceful world for all people.

WCR 1327 Resolution on Marriage (adopted April 28, 2023)

Whereas, Marriage is a sacrament and sacred covenant relationship of love and equality between two people and recognized as a valued institution in the cultures of the world; and

Whereas, Understandings, definitions, practices, traditions, and laws regarding marriage and marriage-like relationships vary throughout the nations and cultures of the world; and

Whereas, The World Conference is counseled through Doctrine and Covenants 164:7b to address “principles of behavior and relationships” but “not decide specific policies for all nations when those decisions likely will cause serious harm in some of them.”; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That WCR 1182 be rescinded; and, be it further

Resolved, That apostles have responsibility for establishing and upholding definitions, guidelines, practices, and policies regarding marriage and marriagelike relationships within nations or other geographic groupings where the laws, cultures, and traditions for marriage are similar; and be it further

Resolved, That all definitions, guidelines, practices, and policies developed by apostles be reviewed and approved by the Council of Twelve Apostles and First Presidency prior to implementation; and be it further

Resolved, That all definitions, guidelines, practices, and policies are developed in harmony with the principle of monogamy our Enduring Principles, and the behavior and relationship principles of Christ-like love, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, covenant, and faithfulness identified in Doctrine and Covenants 164:6 and further explored in the Commentary on Principles; and be it further

Resolved, All definitions, guidelines, practices, and policies seek to uphold the Worth of All Persons, foster mutuality and equality, and protect the most vulnerable; and be it further

Resolved, That basic resources be recommended to assist in education before and after the sacrament of marriage that support marriage as lived relationship and model the principles identified above.

WCR 1329 Compassion for Refugees/UN World Refuge Day (adopted April 28, 2023)

Whereas, Desperate human beings have fled hostilities and sought sanctuary in other lands since ancient times, even as cited in scripture; and

Whereas, Such threatened people are refugees, defined as persons “forced to flee their home country due to persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group” (Sermon Talking Points for HIAS Refugee Shabbat: March 4–5, 2022); and

Whereas, In 2021, 84 million displaced persons worldwide (26.6 million categorized as refugees by the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency), were harbored in neighboring nations, many of these nations with very limited resources to help these refugees resettle and integrate into their countries to start a new future; and

Whereas, The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) in Article 14 upholds the rights of refugees, “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution”; and

Whereas, Many teachings from the Hebrew Bible and New Testament teach us to serve and protect the most vulnerable, such as, “The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself.” (Leviticus 19:34) and “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in” (Matthew 25:35); and

Whereas, In recent times, the church has received counsel repeatedly to show compassion to those experiencing needless suffering: “God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God’s will. Open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children. Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a); and

Whereas, The Church has been told, “Even as the One you follow reached out to those who were rejected and marginalized, so must the community that bears his name” (Doctrine and Covenants 162:6c); and

Whereas, World Conference Resolutions such as WCR 1177 “Peace” notes, “God’s concern for caring within the human family throughout the world” and encourages us to participate “with other organizations constructively promoting peaceful existence of humanity;” and WCR 1184 “Human Rights” affirms that among all people’s essential rights are “freedom from fear and threats to personal safety and well-being”; and WCR 1226 “Human Diversity” encourages the use of educational materials, worship resources and leadership training that “reveals the unqualified love of God and the inestimable worth of all people”; and

Whereas, In Community of Christ, our global Mission Initiatives and Enduring Principles inspire us to Abolish Poverty, End [Needless] Suffering and uphold the Worth of All Persons; and

Whereas, Many trustworthy, ecumenical, interfaith, governmental, and non-governmental global organizations are already in the forefront of mobilizing humanitarian solutions to address this desperate need for refugee aid and resettlement; and

Whereas, Our efforts will be best placed alongside the expertise and connections of these worthy partners, using their extensive resource materials, support, and programs so Community of Christ can become well informed and well connected for deeper compassion and practical acts of love to save lives, welcome, integrate, and care for refugees; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Community of Christ shows solidarity with refugees everywhere by urging churchwide awareness of the scope of refugee needs through the establishment of an annual Refugee Day coordinated with the United Nations World Refugee Day of June 20th; and be it further

Resolved, That the World Conference request the Ecumenical and Interfaith Ministries team to collect and prepare multilingual resources (including potential worship resources and calls to action) across the international church for mission centres, congregations, and groups to learn about, plan, collaborate, and implement refugee awareness and support including climatic refugees.

Referred to the First Presidency by Delegate Vote

G-2 Recommendation to move Doctrine and Covenants Section 116 to Historical Records

Referred to the First Presidency at Adjournment

D-2 World Church Budgeting and Audit Process

G-6 A Resolution to Enhance Transparency, Openness, and Disclosure Concerning the First Presidency's Statement on Community of Christ's Position on Nonviolence

G-8 Resolution Opposing Christian Zionism

Defeated by Delegate Vote

G-5 Universal Scripture Access