

CONSTITUTION

Women of the Church

First Presbyterian Church
Columbia, South Carolina

Revised and Approved May 2025

ARTICLE I.

Name

This organization shall be known as **Women of the Church of The First Presbyterian Church (WOC)**, Columbia, South Carolina; part of Catawba Presbytery, Catawba Women's Ministries, General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and ARP Women's Ministries.

ARTICLE II.

Purpose

The purpose of the Women of The First Presbyterian Church is to glorify God. We provide avenues for personal spiritual growth and the development of spiritual gifts, expressing our God-given commission through fellowship, Bible study, encouragement, prayer support, care, and assistance in time of need, thus equipping and touching the lives of women who, in like manner, share the love of Christ with families, the community, the nation, and the world.

ARTICLE III.

Membership

The *membership* of the **Women of the Church (WOC)** shall be divided into small groups called Circles, which gather monthly for fellowship, Bible Study, prayer, and service.

ARTICLE IV.

Officers

The officers of the WOC shall be the following:

i. General Officers will consist of:

- a. Director of Women's Ministry,
- b. President,
- c. Past President/Parliamentarian,
- d. President-Elect,
- e. Recording Secretary,
- f. Corresponding Secretaries (2),
- g. Treasurer,
- h. General Circle Chair, and
- i. Assistant General Circle Chair.

ii. Department Chairs will consist of:

- a. Christian Education Chair,
- b. Local Missions,
- c. Spiritual Life Chair,
- d. World Mission Chair, and
- e. Historian.

iii. Committee Chairs will consist of:

- a. Crisis Chair,
- b. Nominating Chair,
- c. Hospitality Chair,
- d. Visitation Chair,
- e. Holiday Decorating Chair,
- f. Freezer Ministry Chair, and
- g. All Circle Chairs and Co-Chairs

These officers shall be known as the **Board of the Women of the Church**.

ARTICLE V.

Governance

The WOC shall be under the governance of the Session of the Church.

ARTICLE VI.

Meetings

The regular meetings of the **WOC** shall consist of monthly **Board of the Women of the Church** and Circle Meetings. General Meetings of the membership of the **WOC** will be planned by the **Board**.

ARTICLE VII.

Amendments

Section 1. The Constitution may be amended at any General Meeting by a 2/3 vote of those present and voting, provided that the proposed amendments have been submitted to and approved by the **Board** and presented to the Circles prior to the vote.

Section 2. All such proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the **Board** and signed by two members.

BYLAWS

Women of the Church
First Presbyterian Church
Columbia, South Carolina

Revised and Approved May 2025

ARTICLE I: Membership

Section 1. The *membership* of the WOC shall be composed of all women who join a Circle.

Section 2. The *membership* of the WOC shall be divided into Circles.

Section 3. The local organization is a member of the *ARP Women's Ministries*, as well as the *Catawba Women's Ministries*. The President, Treasurer or proxy and two members-at-large of the WOC shall constitute voting representatives to the yearly meeting of *Catawba Women's Ministries*. All WOC voting representatives at *Catawba Women's Ministries* must be members of First Presbyterian Church.

ARTICLE II: Nomination, Election, and Terms of Office

Section 1. There shall be an annual election of new officers to the WOC Board. Each officer shall be eligible for one term in any given office, with exceptions to be made by vote of the WOC Board. Each WOC Board officer will be a member of the circle of her choice.

Section 2. The *Nominating Committee* shall be made up of the Director of Women's Ministry, Nominating Chair, and at least two additional committee members who shall be chosen by the Chair and approved by the WOC Board. The WOC President will be available for consultation and assistance as needed. The *Nominating Committee* shall propose a candidate for each office of the Board of the Women of the Church, having obtained the approval of the Christian Education Committee of the Session through the Director of Women's Ministry, by presenting the slate to the current Board for approval no later than the March WOC Board meeting.

Section 3. Upon Board approval, the *nominated slate* shall be presented to each Circle at their March Meeting. Any questions regarding the *nominated slate* shall be presented by the Circle Chair to the WOC President by the end of March. The *nominated slate* shall be presented for approval by the membership at the May General Membership Meeting prior to term of-service for approval by the membership, preceding installation of the officers.

Section 4. The Director of Women's Ministry is a non-elected officer. The Elected *Officers* shall be divided into two groups. Group I shall be elected for a term of one year, and Group II shall be elected in alternating years for two-year terms as follows:

- i. **Group I (one-year terms)**
 - A. President
 - B. Past President/Parliamentarian
 - C. President-Elect
 - D. General Circle Chair
 - E. Assistant Circle Chair
 - F. Nominating Chair

- ii. **Group II (two-year terms)**
 - A. Recording Secretary
 - B. Corresponding Secretaries (2)
 - C. Treasurer
 - D. Christian Education Chair
 - E. Historian
 - F. Crisis Chair
 - G. Spiritual Life Chair
 - H. Local Missions Chair
 - I. World Missions Chair
 - J. Hospitality Chair
 - K. Holiday Decorations Chair
 - L. Events Coordinator Chair
 - M. Visitation Chair
 - N. Freezer Ministry Chair
 - O. All Circles Chairs and Co-Chairs

- iii. The President-Elect shall succeed the President.

- iv. The Assistant General Circle Chair shall succeed the General Circle Chair.

Section 5. Circle Chairs or Co-Chairs shall be elected every two years. The Chair or one of the Co-Chairs for each Circle is expected to attend the monthly WOC Board Meetings

Section 6. The *Officers* of the WOC shall be installed at the May General Membership Meeting prior to their term of service. Officers shall assume the responsibilities of office upon installation. The retiring officers, including Circle Chairs, shall complete the business of the year and give the incoming officer their Officer's Notebook by the end of May.

Section 7. The *Nominating Committee* shall nominate a candidate to fill any vacancy which occurs on the WOC Board, with the exception of the President (Article IV, Section 1.ii.).

ARTICLE III: Organizational Features

Section 1. The General Officers, the Department Chairs, the elected Committee Chairs, and the Circle Chairs and Co-Chairs shall constitute the WOC Board. Each WOC Board Member is expected to attend the monthly Board Meetings.

Section 2. The *Executive Board* shall be composed of the Director of Women's Ministry, the President, the Past President/Parliamentarian, the President-Elect (ex-officio), Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and General Circle Chair. This committee shall act on behalf of the WOC Board when necessary.

ARTICLE IV: Duties of Officers

Section 1. General Officers

The *Board of the WOC* shall have supervision over the affairs of the local WOC organization, but shall refer any proposals to the full membership for a vote. When immediate action is necessary, the Executive Board (Article III, Section 2) can act on behalf of the WOC.

The primary responsibility of each officer is to plan the work of the Women of the Church with the Board. Her special responsibilities are described under the section dealing with her position. Each officer's term begins upon installation at the May General Membership Meeting and continues until a newly-elected member assumes said position the following May.

i. The *President of the WOC* shall:

- A. In the summer of the term, assist the General Circle Chair in preparing the WOC Yearbook, including choosing a color and logo each year;
- B. preside and report at all meetings of the WOC and the WOC Board;
- C. conduct a training session for Board members the August prior to the beginning of the WOC year;

- D. inform WOC Board of events in the life of the church and the denomination and provide information to the church office for communication;
- E. call special meetings, if needed;
- F. appoint such committees as are needed (including the Awards Committee) and appoint a WOC representative to church-wide committees, if requested;
- G. report to the President of the Catawba Women's Ministries, as requested;
- H. report to the Director of Women's Ministry of First Presbyterian Church, as requested;
- I. be an ex-officio member of Circles and of any WOC committee except the Nominating Committee where the WOC President will be available for consultation and assistance as needed;
- J. The President will be a voting member of the Finance Committee
- K. determine appropriate honorariums, which may be in the form of a financial gift or donation to an appropriate ministry, with the Financial committee
- L. act as a voting representative with the Treasurer and two members-at-large of the WOC at the yearly meeting of Catawba Women's Ministries;
- M. visit each Circle during the course of her term;
- N. coordinate Christmas Cheer and May General Membership Meeting; and
- O. coordinate awards to be given at the May General Membership Meeting.

ii. The *Past President / Parliamentarian* shall:

- A. have served as a former *President of the Women of the Church*;
- B. perform all the duties of the Presidency in the President's absence;
- C. upon resignation of the President, shall become President and hold office through the unexpired term of the former President;
- D. serve as the primary resource for parliamentary procedure for the WOC Board; and
- E. see that approved changes to the Constitution and By-Laws are incorporated into the formal documents.

iii. The *President-Elect* shall:

- A. have served in some capacity on the Board of the WOC within the last 10 years;

- B. study the Constitution;
- C. become familiar with the work of the Women of the Church;
- D. in March, during her term of service, determine the calendar for WOC events for her term as President, including meeting with Women's Ministry Staff and the WOC administrative assistant;
- E. take prayer requests each month and pray to close the Board Meetings;
- F. meet with the Treasurer in August to become a secondary signatory on the WOC bank account; and
- G. assist the President of the WOC as needed

iv. The *Recording Secretary* shall:

- A. record the minutes of the monthly meetings of the WOC Board and send said minutes to the President for distribution and Board approval, and
- B. record the minutes of the business sessions of the May General Membership Meeting and other meetings as requested by the President of the WOC.

v. The *Corresponding Secretaries (2)* shall:

- A. attend to correspondence of the WOC, including notes of congratulations on births, concern for health issues, sympathy for loss, and acknowledgement of WOC memorial gifts. Board members and the pastoral report will inform the Corresponding Secretaries of specific needs, and church stationery will be used and obtained from the administrative assistant. The Corresponding Secretaries can divide tasks as desired, and
- B. substitute for the Recording Secretary to take minutes when necessary.

vi. The *Treasurer* shall:

- A. receive and record all monies of the Women of the Church;
- B. pay bills and disburse funds as directed by the WOC Board;
- C. remit benevolences to the Treasurer of the Church;
- D. remit Contingent Funds as directed by the Treasurer of the Catawba Women's Ministries;
- E. prepare monthly and quarterly financial reports for the WOC Board and for the business session of the May General Membership Meeting;
- F. provide the Clerk of the Session with a financial report, if requested;

- G. serve as Chair of the Finance Committee (Article V, Section 1); and
- H. compile statistical records as instructed by the President.

iv. The *General Circle Chair* and the *Assistant General Circle Chair* shall:

- A. prepare and edit the Yearbook with assistance from the President, as well as the WOC administrative assistant;
- B. help each Circle fulfill its purpose of being a sustaining Christian fellowship which provides opportunities for study and service;
- C. assign new members to Circles as needed;
- D. make changes in Circles when necessary;
- E. meet with Circle Chairs and Co-Chairs in February to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, and concerns within the Circles; a summary of Circle findings will be provided to the President by April 1.
- F. coordinate with the WOC President to train the Circle Chairs for their work as Circle leaders; and
- G. work with the Congregational Nurse and Freezer Chair in order to communicate freezer needs and usage to Circle Chairs.
- H. Provide monthly updates on Circle attendance to the President

Section 2. Department Committee Chairs

The primary responsibility of each *Department Committee Chair* is to plan the program for the WOC with the WOC Board. The special responsibilities of each Chair are described under the section dealing with her work. She may select a committee to assist her in her duties.

i. The *Christian Education Chair* shall:

- A. report about Erskine College and Seminary classes available for church members to audit;
- B. report on activities available to members at Bonclarken Conference Center and on the church's present involvement there;
- C. place orders for Bibles to be given to the graduating high school seniors, with direction from the youth department; and
- D. promote Bonclarken at the May General Membership Meeting.
- E. serve as liaison for the WOC and the Christian Growth and Nurture Committee of the Session and with the church staff in the ministry to the children, youth, and families of the church.

- F. submit an end of the year report to the Historian and the President by the end of May.

ii. The *Historian* shall:

- A. document the activities of the WOC during her term of service, specifically by taking or collecting pictures at WOC or Women's Ministry events and compiling a photobook to document the year;
- B. provide photographs to the President for use in her year-end report, if requested;
- C. compile annual written histories of the WOC and First Presbyterian Church;
- D. make copies of the WOC History and the Church History to be sent to the Catawba Women's Ministries Historian and President; and
- E. compile a report on WOC deaths and send it to Catawba Women's Ministries Memorial Leader by the yearly deadline for the inclusion in the memorial service at the Catawba Women's Ministries meeting.

iii. The *Spiritual Life Chair* shall:

- A. secure the Bible Moderators for each Circle, with approval from the Christian Education Committee of the Session through the Director of Women's Ministry;
- B. secure the teacher/pastor for the moderator's monthly instruction preceding Circle meetings;
- C. coordinate WOC participation in our church's observances of World and National Days of Prayer, if asked;
- D. plan the devotionals for the WOC Board meetings;
- E. Plan the Prayer Emphasis Event with the WOC President, World Missions Chair, and Hospitality Chair;
- F. coordinate the order for the WOC Study Book for the year with the Church Librarian; and
- G. submit an end of the year report to the Historian and the President by the end of May.

iv. The *Local Missions Chair* shall:

- A. provide contact information for our Circles on opportunities for service projects in the community and throughout the church;
- B. Coordinate all WOC Circle projects with Session approved local missions and with the ministry of the church as a whole

- C. help develop projects for Circles and encourage the Circles' outreach through suggested projects;
- D. contact each Circle in September and April to assess involvement with their local mission and report findings to the WOC Board in October and May
- E. implement Synod's programs and support the work of all church extension fields, particularly those in Catawba Presbytery;
- F. attend the Session's Local Missions Committee meetings for informational purposes.
- G. submit an end of the year report to the Historian by the end of May.

v. The *World Missions Chair* shall:

- A. act as liaison to the world missions of the church;
- B. keep the WOC informed regarding our church's mission trips;
- C. keep the news and needs of our denomination's mission fields and specific missionaries before the WOC, especially those supported by our own church, and assign First Presbyterian Church Missionaries to each Circle;
- D. plan the Thanksgiving for Missions and Jubilee Birthday events with the President of the WOC, coordinating with the Hospitality Chair and Food Services;
- E. find and secure speakers for Thanksgiving for Missions and Jubilee Birthday events
- F. obtain session approval (through the Director of Women's Ministry) for speakers for Thanksgiving for Missions and Jubilee Birthday
- G. coordinate work with the Director of World Missions;
- H. attend the Session's World Missions Committee meetings for informational purposes;
- I. submit an end of the year report to the Historian by the end of May.

vi. The *Administrative Assistant* (a paid church position) shall:

- A. set up online registration for WOC events;
- B. coordinate printing of WOC promotional materials with the First Presbyterian Church Communications Coordinator; and
- C. work with the General Circle Chair and Assistant General Circle Chair to prepare and edit the Directory.

Section 3. Elected Committee Chairs

The individual responsibilities of each *Elected Committee Chair* are described under the section dealing with each position. All Elected Committee Chairs may select committees to assist them in their duties.

i. The General *Crisis Chair* shall:

- A. support church families at times of death with a bereavement meal, if not being provided by a Circle;
- B. coordinate with the Pastoral Care program of the church, including the Pastoral Care Administrative Assistance and the Executive Chef;
- C. maintain the Bereavement Bag ministry, overseeing the acquisition of supplies, assembly of the Bereavement Bags, and delivery of Bereavement Bags, if asked; and
- D. compile a team to assist with these duties.
- E. submit an end of the year report to the Historian by the end of May.

ii. The *Hospitality Chair* shall:

- A. help coordinate the mechanical details of all WOC functions, especially any programs involving the serving of food by the WOC;
- B. plan and coordinate decorating for all WOC luncheons, coffees, receptions, etc.;
- C. assist the WOC President and Food Service personnel in planning these events; and
- D. assist the Holiday Decorations Chair in Christmas and Easter decorating.

iii. The *Holiday Decorations Chair* shall:

- A. help coordinate the decoration of the church for Christmas and Easter, including Easter lilies arranged in Sanctuary after the Good Friday service;
- B. find volunteers for decorating teams, as needed; and
- C. communicate these plans with the Hospitality Chair.

iv. The *Nominating Committee Chair* shall:

- A. form a committee with the approval of the WOC Board, comprised of the Director of Women's Ministry and no less than two other members of the WOC, to compile the *nominated slate* of new officers for the next WOC term
- B. ensure names of potential board members are approved by Session through the Director of Women's Ministry;
- C. lead her committee in securing new officers for any offices vacated during the year (with the exception of the President. (Article II, section 7)
- D. present the completed *nominated slate* to the WOC Board for approval no later than the March WOC Board Meeting; and
- E. present the *nominated slate* to the May General Membership Meeting prior to their terms of service.
- F. The WOC President will be available for consultation and assistance as needed.

v. The *Visitation Chair* shall:

- A. help facilitate (with church administration) ordering poinsettias for homebound members at Christmas;
- B. recruit volunteers for and coordinate Christmas poinsettia delivery;
- C. coordinate with the Pastoral Care staff to plan a visiting program to benefit members residing in retirement and nursing homes, as well as those confined to their own homes;
- D. maintain a master list of WOC homebound members and coordinate with the Pastoral Care staff about their needs.
- E. communicate assignment of specific homebound members to individual Circles; and
- F. submit an end of the year report to the Historian and the President by the end of May.

vi. The *Freezer Ministry Chair* shall:

- A. oversee the WOC Freezers;
- B. work with the Congregational Nurse and Pastoral Care departments to assess the usage and needs of the Freezer Ministry;
- C. work with the General Circle Chair, and individual chairs as needed, to communicate the usage and needs of the Freezer Ministry to the Circles;
- D. maintain the Freezers, discarding food when necessary;

- E. coordinate provision of labels or other supplies for the Freezer Ministry through the Pastoral Care department; and
- F. serve on church wide pastoral care committees, if requested.

vii. The **Awards Committee** shall be appointed by the President and will consist of three past WOC presidents. This committee will supervise the individual Recognition Awards to be given at the May General Membership Meeting, and they shall notify family members of those being honored to attend the awards and lunch to follow. The identities of those serving on the committee will not be made public.

A. The Committee will distribute the following awards:

- a. An **Honorary Life Membership** shall honor an ARPWM member who has contributed in an outstanding way to the work of the church on a local, Presbytery, or ARPWM level. A Life Membership pin and certificate are presented to the recipient. This is the highest honor awarded to WOC members in recognition of extraordinary Christian service to the WOC. This honor is given only once.
- b. A **Partner in Ministry** honor shall recognize any person (male or female) who has contributed in a significant way to the work of Women's Ministries at the local, Presbytery, or ARPWM level. A Partner in Ministry pin and certificate are presented to the recipient. This honor is given only once.
- c. A **Love Gift** shall be given to show love and appreciation to any individual church member, male or female. A Love Gift certificate is presented to the recipient. This gift may be given more than once. Love Gifts may be given in honor or memory of church members.
- d. A **Memorial** shall be given to honor the memory of a faithful church member, male or female. A Memorial certificate will be presented to the family of the person being honored. A Memorial may be given by more than one person/circle/church and may be given more than once.

B. At the beginning of April, The WOC Treasurer will forward appropriate monies and the necessary forms for these awards to the *ARP Women's Ministry* Treasurer for these awards and secure the necessary materials (certificates, pins, etc.) from the *ARP Women's Ministry Treasurer*.

Section 4. The Circle Chairs and Co-Chairs

Circle Chairs and Co-Chairs shall work with the WOC Board and with the General Circle Chair to strengthen the work of the Circles. They shall also appoint Circle officers, coordinate the Circle meetings and activities, communicate WOC information, and make announcements at the WOC Board meetings, and attend the Circle Chairs training at the WOC Board Orientation in August.

ARTICLE V: Finance Committee

Section 1. The *Finance Committee*, an advisory Committee for the Treasurer, shall be composed of the Treasurer as Chair, the Director of Women's Ministry, the Chair of World Missions, the Chair of Local Missions, the General Circle Chair, the President, and the President-Elect. The President may also ask the incoming Treasurer to attend. The President may also appoint additional members, as needed.

Section 2. The *Finance Committee* shall prepare a tentative budget for presentation to the WOC Board at the final meeting of the WOC Board. They shall present the Board-approved budget at the General May Membership Meeting for approval and adoption by the general membership of the WOC.

Section 3. A Circle shall not assume any financial responsibility from the WOC budget without the approval of the WOC Board.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall make a payment to the *Treasurer of ARP Women's Ministries* to cover any Life Membership, Memorial, Love Gift, and Partner in Ministry awards that may be given.

Section 5. Only such funds as are handled by the Treasurer of the local organization shall be included in the financial report.

Section 6. President elect shall register as secondary signature for WOC accounts. At the end of her term, she shall be removed as secondary signature for WOC accounts.

ARTICLE VI: Circles

Section 1. All women of the congregation are invited to join a WOC Circle.

Section 2. Each Circle should be designated by a number. Circles may also have a name.

Section 3. Each Circle shall have a Chair or 2 Co-Chairs and a Treasurer.

Section 4. Each Circle will select a Circle project (local ministry) to support.

Section 5. Each Circle will be assigned a missionary/missionaries and homebound members, to whom the active members will minister.

Section 6. The strengths, weaknesses, and concerns of Circles shall be evaluated each year by the Circle Chair/Co-Chair. This evaluation shall be reviewed with the General Circle Chair and the Assistant Circle Chair.

ARTICLE VII: Meetings

Section 1. All regular meetings shall be scheduled by the WOC Board. The annual General Membership Meeting of the WOC shall take place in May. It will be called the May General Membership Meeting in these formal documents.

Section 2. The WOC Board will meet the first Monday or Tuesday of each month with the exception of June, July, and August. Sometimes, the May Board Meeting will occur on the last Tuesday of April.

Section 3. The *Circles* will meet monthly, with the exception of June, July, and August. They may meet at additional times, if desired.

Section 4. *Special Meetings* of the WOC may be held, with Board approval, at the call of the President or upon written request of five (5) members, with due notice given to the membership.

Section 5. Change of time or cancellation of meetings may be made with approval of the WOC Board or the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VIII: Quorum

Section 1. Five percent (5%) of the active general Circle membership shall constitute a quorum for business sessions of the WOC, provided there are two *General Officers*, two *Department Chairs*, and a majority of the *Circle Chairs* (or a designated representative) present.

Section 2. Two *General Officers*, two *Department Chairs*, and a majority of the *Circle Chairs* (or a designated representative) shall constitute a quorum for the Board of the WOC.

Section 3. Twenty percent (20%) of the membership of a Circle, provided it includes one Circle officer, shall constitute a Circle quorum.

ARTICLE IX: Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised shall be used by the WOC as a guide to parliamentary procedure.

ARTICLE X: Suggested Order of Business for Business Sessions for May General Membership Meeting

WOC Board and General Meetings should follow this format:

1. Call to Order and Prayer
2. Devotional/Lesson
3. Quorum
4. Approval of Minutes
5. Reports (Officers, Circles, WOC Board, Special Committees, Guests)
6. Old Business
7. New Business (election of officers, installation of officers, presentation of awards, etc.)
8. Closing Prayer
9. Adjournment

ARTICLE XI: Amendments

Section 1. *Amendments* to these by-laws shall be governed by the regulations set up under the Constitution Article VII, Sections 1 and 2.

Section 2. All *proposed amendments* shall be submitted in writing to the WOC Board and signed by two WOC members.