
MURRIETA CHURCH OF CHRIST (MCOCC)

8 March 2017

Governing Policies and Statements of Faith**INTRODUCTION**

Because of recent changes in our laws (Federal, State and local ordinances), it is now necessary to document, in writing, the character and nature of our beliefs and the policy framework which governs the operations and functions of the Murrieta Church of Christ. This document is necessary to provide mandatory policies which govern the Murrieta Church of Christ functions and operations. It defines our organization and policies to be consistent with the Bible and the laws of the United States and California. In today's social, political and legal environments it has become common to attack those who believe the Bible to be the Word of God and who believe it to be The Truth. *Note: This document is not intended to address every possible circumstance nor situation, rather, it provides guidelines and policies relative to our functions and operations, to be consistent with the public law and the Bible.*

As the Body of Christ in Murrieta, California, we remain firmly committed to our Lord Jesus Christ and maintain our firm commitment to the inerrant Word of God (Holy Bible), which is TRUTH.

Note: The terms "Bible", "Holy Bible", and "Word of God" are used interchangeably throughout this document and refer to the holy inspired words of God written in the New American Standard Translation (NAS). This translation is the only translation that shall be used by the elders to render a decision, resolve an issue or to administer discipline. All Bible passages that are referenced but not quoted within this document are to be associated with this translation. Although other translations may be available for members' use, the NAS is the sole source of guidance used by the elders. Members are free to select and use any translation they choose. Other translations may be made available in the auditorium for our Assemblies and used during worship.

Murrieta Church of Christ (MCoC)

Statement of Beliefs and Policy

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS (FAITH)

This statement of Beliefs does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God. It speaks with final authority concerning Truth, Morality, and the proper Conduct of a Christian, the community of Christians (church) and mankind and is the sole and final source of all that we believe concerning such matters. For purposes of MCoC and our Faith, Doctrine, Practice, Policy and Discipline, our Elders (aka: Shepherds, Pastors) are our final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application to MCoC and its Members. The principle translation that will be used for the purposes of governing our operations and functions is the New American Standard Translation (NAS). Our members may select any Translation they choose for personal use. The church will provide copies of the New Living Translation (NLT), an easy to read version, for uses in our corporate worship. Members and guest are free to take a copy of this Bible for personal use.

GENERAL OPERATIONS AND FUNCTIONS OF MCOCC

Worship: it shall be the practice of the MCoC to conduct **corporate** worship in accordance with the following **acts** of Worship, as determined by the Elders. The below list is meant to set the general expectations for Worship Services; however, worship is a continuous activity in which the Members glorify God in all aspects of their lives—not just in Sunday corporate worship. From time to time, the acts of Worship may be altered for special occasions, as approved by the Elders.

- a. Acapella singing, led by capable men--without mechanical or electronic musical accompaniment.
- b. Communion shall consist of Unleavened Bread and non-alcoholic 100% Red Grape juice. "Open" Communion shall be served every Sunday, presided over and served by male Members of the congregation, for the specific purpose stated by Jesus in the Scriptures, "Do this in Remembrance of Me." (Matt 20: 19-20) Before serving the Communion a

warning should be given relative to eating the Bread and drinking the Cup in an unworthy manner. I Cor 11: 23-32.

- c. Collection of a free-will offering every Sunday, presided over and collected by male Members, from all willing visitors but specifically from Members.
- d. Preaching of the Word by the current minister (paid Preacher). Substitute preachers shall be Members at-large of the global Church of Christ.
- e. Offering of an Invitation to all non-members to be baptized, for the remission of sin and to receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Usually accomplished at the end of the sermon, by the Preacher. Included is an opportunity, for anyone who wishes, to pray with one of our Elders, for their spiritual benefit.
- f. Opening and closing prayer, in the Name of Jesus Christ. Led by capable male Members, in good standing.
- g. Worship leaders, servers, ushers, Scripture readers and security personnel are designated specifically and scheduled to perform these functions (usually monthly). Substitutes may be selected and appointed, as necessary, by the Deacon responsible for Worship and Assembly. All these shall be male Members of the MCoC congregation.
- h. Bible passages used during our corporate Worship may be quoted from: NAS, KJV, NKJ, NLT, NIV. The New American Standard (NAS, updated 1995) shall be used as the principle translation from which the Elders shall draw conclusions, make decisions and resolve matters related Faith, Belief, Policy, Operations and Functions of the Murrieta Church of Christ.
- i. The order in which these functions of worship are performed may vary but are always conducted in an orderly and respectful manner.
- j. Expressions of Concurrence ("amen!"), of Joy (clapping) and of Adoration (lifting of hands) during corporate worship, are welcome, if done in a respectful manner and not done to draw attention to oneself. Our periods of corporate worship shall, at times, be solemn and other times full of praise and joy, but always sacred because the God of Creation is being remembered, thanked, worshipped and praised. All Glory belongs to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- k. Bible classes for all ages are conducted every Sunday, except on special occasions. These classes are taught by male Members (for adults) but for

ladies' classes and children these may be taught by women, who have excellent Bible knowledge and the wisdom of years and experience. (Titus 2: 3-5)

- l. Reserved
- m. Reserved
- n. Reserved

MEMBERSHIP

A "**Member**" of the Murrieta Church of Christ is any person who: (a) has willingly confessed that Jesus is the son of God (Rom. 10:9); (b) has been baptized (immersed in water) in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19); (c) lives a life that is worthy of being called an Ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20), and who willingly accepts the leadership and authority of the appointed Elders of MCoC. (Acts 20: 28-31). It is expected that Members worship, contribute, study, and fellowship regularly with the MCoC church body (John 4:24).

Members consist of:

- a. Elders, serve as the spiritual overseers, and are responsible for the day-to-day spiritual health and well-being of the congregation and individual Members. Elders are selected from among the mature adult male Members and must meet the qualification as specified in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 of the Holy Bible (NAS). The term of service is determined by each individual elder. Collectively, as covered in the By MCoC By Laws, the Elders also serves as the Board of Trustees, for representing the Murrieta Church of Christ in legal and contract matters, including employment and other legal contracts. The Board of Trustees also maintains and complies with the Organizational Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws of the MCoC, in compliance with the Laws of the state of California.
 - 1. Elders, also known as Shepherds or Overseers and serve as unpaid volunteers and function like shepherds. Shepherds tend the flock and do so in the best interest of the flock and individual sheep. Elders function from a position of Trust and Authority

over spiritual matters. Shepherds do not OWN the flock; they are caretakers OF the flock and FOR the Owner, The Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Elders shall make decisions and govern by four rules:
 - i. **All decisions** are deliberated until a “consensus” is reached.
 - ii. **Good Faith.** Elders’ decisions are made based on good faith, treating all Members and each Member with equal consideration.
 - iii. **Best interest.** The elders are also Members of the Body; however, the decisions made by the Elders shall be in the best Interest of the Body not in the best interest of the eldership, a group, a Member or person(s).
 - iv. **Reasonable Inquiry.** Decisions shall be based on Scripture (NAS) and substantiated by facts of sufficient quality and quantity so as to render a reasonable judgment. If professional assistance or expert opinion is needed, then it will be sought and paid for.
- b. Deacons serve the congregation as unpaid volunteers and perform duties assigned by the elders. Typically, deacon plan and lead the various Ministries and perform various functions which further the mission, operations and functions of the congregation. Deacons are selected from among the adult male Members and must meet the qualification specified in I Timothy 3.
- c. Ministers are also Members but are paid employees and serve the congregation, as described in their employment contracts.
- d. All Members (male and female) are Ambassadors for Christ and, as such, are expected to represent the Lord Jesus Christ in their personal lives, both private and public. (II Cor 5: 16-22) Ambassadors for Christ are the primary means by which we spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in Murrieta and foreign missions, and thereby reconcile all people to God.

- e. Members have talents and skills given to them by God. Each Member functions just like the members of a human body—each contributing to the mission and functions of the MCoC body. Members are financially responsible for the mission and sustainment of the Murrieta Church of Christ. Through Members' free-will offering they provide the means to purchase and maintain church property, support the various Ministries and execute the Mission of the congregation.
- f. Placing membership at MCoC: Individuals and families, who live in this area, may place membership in this congregation through an informal process. They can request to be recognized as a Member by the Assembled MCoC congregation at any time, and;
 - a. By transferring their Membership from another Church of Christ, or
 - b. By their previous conversion to Christ through baptism. See "Member" as defined above.
 - c. By placing Membership, a person or family consents *willingly to accept the leadership and authority of the appointed Elders of MCoC. (Acts 20: 28-31).*

Note: MCoC does not ask new or current Members to prove their qualifications to be a Member (i.e., show baptismal certificate) nor does it require proof of marriage. These are matters between themselves and God. However, Member are judged based on their behavior, participation, fellowship and knowledge of and compliance with the Scriptures.

- g. All Members agree to abide by the spiritual directions provided by the Elders and to maintain continuity and good order within the congregation. In matters of Judgment related to spiritual matters and the Bible translation, related to the functions and operations of the MCoC and related to matters of individual Member's Discipline, all Members agree to be subject to the Elders' decisions, oversight and discipline.
- h. "Attendees" of MCoC are composed of individuals (Male and Female) who attend services at MCoC, but have not yet met the definition for

- “Member.” Attendees do not have the same rights as Members, with respect to selecting or objecting to candidates for Elders or Deacons.
- i. Reserved
 - j. Reserved
 - k. Reserved

MEMBERS DISCIPLINE

Disciplining a Member is rare, but necessary when circumstances warrant. Such conditions include: sins that have, in some way, injured or offended another person or Member and/or could bring (or has brought) shame or discredit on the Lord or His Body, Murrieta Church of Christ. These circumstances may include but are not limited to: Adultery; a violation of civil law; creating division within the congregation; teaching false doctrine; immodesty; acts of unkindness; slander; etc. (Eph 5: 1-5, I Cor 5: 1, 9-13, I Thes 4: 3, Rom 1: 20-32) The purpose of church discipline is the spiritual restoration of a fallen Member and the consequent strengthening of the church Body and glorifying of the Lord. When an errant Member is rebuked and he (or she) turns from the sin and is forgiven, by God, he (or she) is won back to the fellowship with the Body and with its head, Jesus Christ. The goal of church discipline is not to cast a Member out of the fellowship or to feed a self-righteous pride of those who administer the discipline. It is not to embarrass a Member or to exercise authority and power in some unbiblical manner. Sin and the shame it brings stains the entire Body of Christ and must not be named among the Members. (Eph 5: 1-5) Jesus even goes on to say that a brother who will not repent should be treated as a “Gentile” (in Jewish terms: an infidel) and a “Tax-collector” (in Jewish terms: a Traitor.)

Note: This process may only be used by and for those who are MCoC “Members” and have not terminated their Membership. Once this process begins, the sinful Member, shall not be removed from the disciplinary process until repentance has taken place. However, if the Member leaves the MCoC congregation, the matter will remain Open (and unresolved), until such time that the sinner returns to the MCoC congregation, in repentance. Every effort should be made to seek him (or her) to

bring about repentance and reconciliation. In the case where a Member willing leaves the MCoC congregation (while under Discipline and the discipline matter is not resolved) and he (or she) places membership at a different CoC congregation ("receiving congregation"), the matter may be referred to the receiving congregation ONLY if written inquiry is made from the elders of the receiving congregation concerning that member.

The purpose of Discipline is to restore an errant Member to holiness and bring him (or her) back into a Holy relationship with God and family of Members of the Murrieta Church of Christ. Matters of church self-discipline are related in the following Scripture: Matt 18: 15-18, Luke 15: 1-4, Gal 6: 1, II Thess 3: 11-15, James 5: 19-20, Rom 15: 14, Col 3: 15-16, Lev 19: 17.

The MCoC Elder shall be responsible for Disciplining Members when the sin is made known to the Elders and is determined by the Elders that he or she is unrepentant. This process must also be used when the sin is private (i.e., between brothers or sisters) or when the sin is known to more than one (i.e., brethren or elders). This process begins when the sin is known to a MCoC Member or the MCoC Elders.

- a. The Process of Discipline is contained in Matt 18: 15-17, as stated by Jesus: *"What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? 13. "If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. 14. "So it is not {the} will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish. 15. **"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16. "But if he does not listen {to you,} take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. 17. "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.***

Jesus sets forth the four-step process of church Member discipline:

- (1) Speak to him (or her) in private about the sin;

- (2) If he (or she) does not listen, then take one or two other Members as witnesses.
- (3) If he (or she) will not listen, tell the church; and
- (4) If he (or she) still will not repent, treat him (or her) as a "Gentile and a Tax-Collector." *(This is traditionally known as "dis-fellowship." Dis-fellowship occurs when an unrepentant Member is sanctioned from attending church fellowships, worship assemblies, Bible classes and all other church functions, for which his is normally privileged and expected to participate as a Member-in-good-standing.)*

Notes: In this Policy, (NAS) Matthew 18: 12-17 is used as the Scriptural process to be followed when a Member sins (Publicly or Privately).

- b. **Step One (Matt 18: 15)** The process of church discipline begins on an individual level. Jesus said, "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private" (v. 15a). Here, an individual believer is to go to his errant brother (or sister) privately and confront him in a spirit of humility and gentleness. This confrontation involves clearly exposing his sin so that he is aware of it and calling him to repentance. If the errant brother repents in response to the private confrontation, that brother is to be forgiven and restored (v. 15b). Also, see Luke 10: 16.
- c. **Step Two (Matt 18: 16)**. If the errant brother (or sister) refuses to listen to the one who has rebuked him privately, the next step in the discipline process is to take one or two believers (male or female, as appropriate) along to confront him (or her) again (v. 16a). **The purpose of taking other believers is so that "by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed" (v. 16b)**. In other words, the witnesses are present to:
1. Confirm that Step One took place and the accused did not repent.
 2. To add more voices to move him (or her) to repentance, and
 3. To add their voice(s) to Step Three, assuring the process has been accomplished correctly and he remains unrepentant.

Note: If the initial confrontation process (Step One) begins with the elders (a group of witnesses, not one person), then Step Two may still be

followed by having one or two more "believers" as witness attend the Step Two confrontation, to accomplish the same Scriptural purposes "to confirm every fact" as stated above. By following this process and if Step Three is necessary (unrepentant), the church (congregation) is assured the process conforms to Jesus' command and the sinner is unrepentant, even when confronted by the elders and other Members. At the next step of the process, the entire congregation is now aware of the sin and his (or her) unrepentance and the potential consequence (Dis-fellowship).

The presence of additional witnesses is as much a protection for the one being approached as it is for the one (or more) confronting the sinner. After all, a biased person could erroneously say, "Well, I tried to confront him, but he was unrepentant." It would be presumptuous to think that one person could make that ultimate determination, especially if he (or she) was the one against whom the sin was committed (a private sin versus a public sin). The witnesses are needed to confirm whether there is a heart of repentance or one of indifference or rejection. Such a report provides the basis for further action because the facts of the sin have been verified beyond the report of one individual. In the case where the elders conduct this process starting at Step One, the need for additional witnesses at Step Two would be of value: to add their voices to the process if Step Three is necessary and to add credibility to the facts and the elders and confirm he is still unrepentant.

At this point, it should be hoped that the one or two added "believers" who are brought along to confront the errant Member(s) will not have to become public witnesses against him (or her) before the rest of the church. Ideally, their added rebuke should be sufficient to induce a change of heart in the Member that the initial rebuke did not cause. If this change of heart does occur, that brother (or sister) is to be forgiven and restored, and the matter is resolved—pending observable actions of repentance. If the sin was of a public nature, it would be appropriate for the repentant sinner to appear before the entire church to admit the sin and affirm his (of her) repentance. If the repentant does not occur within

a reasonable time frame or if the sin returns, the offending person is to be **informed** of Step Three in this Process and its consequences.

- d. ***Step Three (Matt 18: 17a)***. If the errant Member refuses to listen and respond to the confrontation of additional “Believing” witnesses after a reasonable period, all witnesses are then to tell it to the church (v. 17a). This is most appropriately done by bringing the matter to the attention of the elders, first, who in turn oversee this communication to the church Body.

How long should the witnesses continue to call the person to repentance before telling the church? The elders at MCoC avoid carrying out the third or fourth stage of church discipline until they are reasonably certain that the erring member is continuing to sin, and/or that he (or she) has refused to repent when appropriately confronted by the evidence. The elders may routinely send a letter by registered mail warning the individual that the third of discipline will be taken if they have not received word of repentance by a specific date. When this date has passed, the person’s refusal to repent is to be made known to the congregation, either before the entire assembly or through a fellowship group in which the person is known and loved. It may not be necessary or appropriate to reveal the details or nature of the sin. This is a judgment call and will be up to the discretion of the MCoC Elders, if matter is to be brought before the entire congregation. Such a decision will be based on the impact the “knowledge of the sin” and/or the “details of the sin” may have on the congregation. For example, it would be inappropriate to reveal details of a sexual sin before the entire congregation—when children are present.

It shall be the policy of MCoC, upon enacting Steps Four, to clearly indicate to the congregation that they (elders) have and continue to aggressively and lovingly seeking him (or her) to repent before the fourth step became necessary. That crucial and foreshadowing element of the procedure may be enough to draw the errant Member to repentance and obedience. **If repentance does take** place at Step Three, and within a reasonable time, the errant Member is to be forgiven and restored, by Prayer and Thanksgiving.

- e. **Step Four (Matt 18: 17b).** The fourth and final step in the process of church discipline is ostracism (or Disfellowship). If an errant Member refuses to listen even to the church, that Member is to be ostracized from the Fellowship. Jesus said, “let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer” (v. 17b). The term “Gentile” was primarily used for all non-Jews who held to their traditional paganism and had no part in the Covenant, Assembly, Worship, or social life of the Jews. On the other hand, a “tax-gatherer” was an outcast from the Jews by choice, having become a traitor to his own people and a defender of the Roman occupation forces. Jesus use of these terms doesn’t mean that the church is to treat a Member badly. It simply means that when a believer refuses to repent, the church is to treat him as if he (or she) were outside of their unified church fellowship. They are not to let him (or her) associate with or participate in the blessings and benefits of any of the church assembly and, to not even share a meal with him (or her).

When a man in the Corinthian church refused to forsake an incestuous relationship with his stepmother, the apostle Paul commanded that the man be removed from their midst. (I Cor 5: 13) The believers there were not even to share a meal with him (I Cor 5: 11) because dining with someone was symbolic of a hospitable and cordial fellowship. The one who is persistently unrepentant is to be totally ostracized from the fellowship of the church and treated like an outcast, not as a brother (or sister).

As far as the welfare of the church is concerned, the purpose of putting the brother (or sister) out is to protect the purity of the unified Church Fellowship (I Cor 5: 6), to warn the assembly of the seriousness of intentional sin (I Tim 5: 20), and to give a testimony of righteousness to a watching world. But, as far as the welfare of the brother himself (or sister) is concerned, the purpose of the ostracism is not to punish but to awaken, and it must therefore be done humbly, in love and never in a spirit of self-righteous superiority (II Thess 3: 15).

When a church and its leadership have done all it can to bring an erring Member back to purity of life but is unsuccessful, that individual is to be left to his (or her)

sin and its shame. However, we believe that God will not cast him (or her) away immediately, but God may allow him (or her) to sink still deeper before he (or she) becomes desperate enough to come to his (or her) senses and turn away from his (or Her) error(s). (Luke 15: 11-24)

The command not to have fellowship or even social contact with the unrepentant brother (or sister) does not include all contact. When there is an opportunity to admonish the sinful Member, to try to call the Member back, the opportunity should be taken. In fact, such opportunities should be sought. But the contact should be for the sole purpose of admonishment and restoration and no other.

MEMBERSHIP TERMINATION

Termination: A Member should terminate his (or her) membership in writing, addressed to the Elders, dated and signed. The letter of termination may or may not include reason(s) for termination. Head of household is sufficient to designate a whole Family, if so desired or for one individual, if appropriate.

- a. A MCoC Member may terminate his (or her) membership (individually or as a family) by:
 1. Physically moving their residence from the Murrieta, California area or
 2. A dated Termination letter to the Elders, stating reasons for termination (optional), or
 3. By death, or
 4. Extended or prolonged absence from the MCoC fellowship (i.e., attendance) may or may not signify termination of membership. Illnesses and other absences caused by circumstances beyond the Member's control is not considered membership termination, unless in writing.
 5. If a MCoC Member is dis-fellowshipped or if the member terminates their membership during the discipline process, the facts of the matter will be maintained on file for a period of ten years. If "repentance" occurs at any point during the Discipline Process, the facts of the matter will be maintained for a period of five years, even if he terminates his membership.

6. Reserved
7. Reserved

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Marriage: It should go without saying that marriage matters to our families, our society and to our church Members. God created and sanctified marriage to bring together one man and one woman, the complementary halves of humanity, by joining them in the marriage union to be “one-flesh.” (Gen 2:18-25.) Marriage between one man and one woman “for life” uniquely reflects Christ’s relationship with His Church. (Eph 5:21-33.) Marriage also serves as the universal building blocks of a stable society and a home. (1 Cor 7:2.) Marriage provides the “natural, God-intended” family environment and affords the best environment for children to mature, grow up and be nurtured by a Mother and Father and grandparents. Within the bond of marriage is the God-given privilege and right of sexual relationship. While pre-marital and extra-marital sexual activity may be “accepted” in our society, it is not compatible with moral conduct expected of a Christian nor a Member of MCoC. (1 Thes 4: 1-6, Ephesian 5: 1-10) Extra-marital sex is Adultery (Matt 5: 32) and grounds for divorce, as is abandonment (1 Cor 7: 11-17). All sexual activities outside of marriage, (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, gender alterations or altered appearance, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and pornography, etc.) are all sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.) Accordingly, neither the MCoC staff nor leadership will perform marriage ceremonies between two individuals of the same biological or altered sex. Neither will we condone or recognize such same-sex marriages, civil unions, or domestic partnerships even if the state passes laws that provide for recognition of such unions. Likewise, the Elders will not allow MCoC facilities to be used to perform marriages or host such related events.

Gender matters. God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female, and these distinct, complementary genders individually and together reflect the Image and Likeness of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Some individuals reject their biological sex and often represent themselves as the opposite or blended gender. In so doing, these individuals reject God’s physical design and the gender

for which God created them at birth. Issues of marriage and gender now regularly confront our society, government and churches. Therefore:

- a. Be it known that Marriage is between one man and one woman and is a Holy "permanent" union, instituted by God, for procreation and Family (Gen 1: 27-28, Gen 2: 23-24).
- b. We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His Image and after His Likeness. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and for every other state or condition from conception through death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139, Jeremiah 1: 4-5)
- c. We believe that God offers reconciliation, redemption and restoration to all who believe Jesus is the Son of God, repent and forsake their sins, seek His mercy and forgiveness through Baptism (immersion) into Jesus Christ and then endeavor to walk (live) in a manner that is worthy of the sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 6: 1-8, Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.)
- d. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor tolerated in the Murrieta Church of Christ.
- e. We believe that to preserve the function and integrity of the Murrieta Church of Christ, as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to our Membership and our community, it is imperative that all persons **employed** by MCoC in any capacity (except outside contractors and service providers) or who serve as **volunteers**, agree to and abide by this **Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22.)
- f. We believe that God is Sovereign. The Bible tells us that God said to Moses, *"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."* It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. (Rom. 9:15-16).

It is the policy of the MCoC to faithfully enforce employment standards for Hiring, Performance, Conduct and Termination--for all employees of the MCoC.

- a. All employees are required to sign an employment contract, in which they affirm the MCoC Statements of Faith.
- b. Job descriptions for every employment (paid) position is maintained in the church office. These descriptions make distinctions as to who qualifies for a "Ministerial Position. "
- c. All potential employees must meet the minimum criteria (limits) for employment for a MCoC Ministerial Position and Non-Ministerial Position. This policy is not applicable to outside companies or contractors who bid for work on MCoC property or work on behalf of MCoC (i.e., publishing flyers, etc.) See Appendix 1 for general Job Descriptions (Criteria).

1. Ministerial Positions are specified as:

- i. Elders
- ii. Pulpit Minister
- iii. Deacons
- iv. Administrator
- v. Minister for Youth and Family
- vi. Minister for Children
- vii. Spanish Minister

2. Non-Ministerial Position:

- i. Secretary
- ii. Finance
- iii. Housekeeping

STATEMENT OF FACILITY USE:

Despite attempts to require churches to host same-sex marriage ceremonies, church buildings are private property and used primarily for the exercise of religion throughout the week. As such, the use of church buildings is clearly subject to First Amendment protection and churches have the right to ensure that any use of our facilities is consistent with our religious beliefs and the distinct purposes for which facilities are used. Under current law, no church is forced to open its buildings for uses that conflict with its religious teachings. MCoC has and shall continue to

protect our religious liberty by stating our policies that outlines the religious nature of the facilities and property and, restricts its use to those acting in a manner consistent with MCoC Biblical beliefs and Scripture.

The MCoC facilities were provided to us through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of MCoC Members. The elders desire that the MCoC facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Although the facilities are not generally open for public use, we make our facilities available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating that we are Ambassadors for the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, our facility will not be allowed use by persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, this document, the Bible and the MCoC By-Laws. Nor may MCoC facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the church's faith or moral teachings. The MCoC Elders is the final authority for MCoC facility usage. The MCoC Administrator or his Assistant is the contact person to apply for use of our facilities. This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two important reasons.

- a. First, MCoC shall not, in good conscience, materially cooperate or contribute to activities or with beliefs that are contrary to our faith. Allowing our facilities to be used for purposes that contradict MCoC beliefs would be material cooperation and be inconsistent in using MCoC facilities or property. To do so would also be a grave violation of the MCoC faith and religious practice. (2 Cor 6:14; 1 Thess 5:22.)
- b. Second, it is essential that MCoC present a consistent message to our community, and that the church staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their personal Ambassadorship for the Lord Jesus Christ. Allowing our facilities to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to our faith would have a severe negative impact on the message that we strive to promote. It could also cause confusion and scandal to MCoC Members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing such use of our facilities, the church agrees with and condones the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using our facilities.

Therefore, in no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, advocate, or engage in practices that contradict MCoC faith use any of our facility or property. Nor may MCoC facilities be used in any way that contradicts our faith. This policy applies to all facilities, regardless of whether the facilities are connected to the main building, because we view all our property (including land) as set apart (sanctified) to worship and glorify God. (Col 3:17.)

There are exceptions:

1. Our facilities may be used as a polling place for Local, State and National primaries and elections—this in no way signifies that the MCoC is affiliated with nor supports any political party or person.
2. Our facilities may be used to provide emergency services in the case of a disaster.
3. Our facilities may be used to support private education as an alternative to Public Schools.
4. Other Public service in our community.

APPROVED USERS AND PRIORITY OF USE

The MCoC Administrator or his Assistant is authorized to grant approval for all uses of MCoC facilities, in accordance with the provisions of this Policy document. The Administrator may waive any or all requirements for facility usage for Members, provided the use is consistent with the policies herein. Generally, priority shall be given to MCoC Members, their immediate families, and organized groups that are part of the ministry, organization, or sponsored activities of the church of Christ at large. MCoC facilities and/or equipment will be made available to non-members or outside groups meeting the following qualifications:

1. Groups or persons requesting facility use must affirm that their beliefs and practices and planned uses of the facilities are consistent with MCoC faith and practice.

2. The group or person seeking to use our facility must submit a signed "Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement" form.

3. The group or person seeking facility use must take responsibility for the facilities and equipment used and must agree to abide by MCoC rules of conduct for facility use, as stated below, and as described in any additional instructions provided by MCoC Administrator or his Assistant.

- a. **Facility Use Hours:** Facilities are normally available between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. Use outside these hours may be approved by the MCoC Administrator or his Assistant.
- b. **Scheduling Events:** Facility use requests shall be made to the MCoC Administrator or his Assistant by submitting the "Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement" form. The event(s) will be reserved and placed on the MCoC calendar only after the Administrator or Assistant approves the request.

Fees: Use of MCoC facilities are subject to a maintenance fee to pay for the upkeep of MCoC facilities and to cover utilities cost and cleaning. Members and nonmembers are subject to the church fee schedule and Members have preferred rates. Facilities may be leased to private schools; however, the fees charged shall be less than the standard commercial rate, in order to not violate our tax-exempt status (501(c) 3) status.

FACILITY USE GUIDELINES:

1. **Alcohol Policy:** Alcohol is prohibited in MCoC facilities or on MCoC property. This includes the MCoC parking lot.

2. **Smoking Policy:** Smoking is prohibited in any MCoC facility or within 50 feet of any facility.

3. **Drug Policy:** Possession or use of any controlled substance, legal or illegal is strictly prohibited (includes marijuana, cocaine, etc.). Prescription drug, for use by someone other than the person for whom it was prescribed, is strictly prohibited.

4. Groups are restricted to only those areas of the facility that the group has reserved. Restrooms are always included with all reservations.
5. Food and beverages are allowed in class rooms, offices and the Fellowship room/kitchen/patio. However, no food or drink is allowed in the auditorium.
6. Church equipment, such as tables and chairs, must be returned to original placement, unless otherwise instructed prior to the event.
7. All lights must be turned off, doors locked and the alarm set, upon departure. Note: Some lights are continuously illuminated and cannot be turned OFF.
8. "Clean-up" is addressed in the application for use, and address whether clean-up is the responsibility of the group using the facility, and if so, what constitutes satisfactory "clean-up." The Administrator may also include a clean-up fee, if appropriate.
9. Abusive or foul language, threatening or violent behaviors are strictly prohibited on MCoC premises at all time. Any person exhibiting such behavior will be asked to leave the premises. If they refuse to leave, the Police will be called. Note: MCoC is **not** a "gun free zone."
10. A responsible person or group must sign the "Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement" form prior to use of our facilities.
11. Insurance for all non-MCoC-sponsored events. The group or person using MCoC facilities must obtain liability insurance coverage (except for weddings, funerals, reunions, girl scouts, etc.) in the amount of at least \$1,000,000, naming MCoC as an additional insured. The user must also sign a "Facility Use and an Indemnity and Hold Harmless Agreement."

THIS DOCUMENT (ORIGINAL), INCLUDING ATTACHMENTS, HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE ELDERS OF THE MCoC ON 3/8/17—_____, FOLLOWING REVIEW BY OUR ATTORNEY.

SIGNED AND APPROVED: SIGNED COPIES ON FILE IN THE OFFICE

ROY DAVIS

MIKE SWAGER

STEVE TERRY

DOUG KEUP

APPENDIX 1: JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Job descriptions for employment (paid) position are provided here. Each full or part time paid positions must have a separate job description and contract. There are two separate positions noted here; Ministerial and Non-ministerial.

MINISTERIAL POSITIONS:

A “Ministerial Position” can only be occupied by Members who are tasked with performing the organization’s rituals or teaching and explaining its beliefs.

ELDER

Elders are selected from the Members, approved and appointed by the Members and serve at the behest of and on behalf of all Members. An Elder may not be fired but when it becomes evident that the Members have lost confidence in an Elder, that Elder will resign the office. Elders must meet the qualification found in Titus 1 and I Timothy 3 (and others). An Elder is appointed to a position of Trust and the Members signify their confidence in an individual elder by their nominating and vetting him to serve as an Elder. There shall always be a plurality of Elders. Elders shall always be men.

DEACON

Deacons are selected from the Membership, appointed by the Elders and serve on behalf of the Membership. A Deacon (Servant) serves the congregation in various functions by both Direct and Indirect Support. Deacons are tested and then selected based on their skills and desired to serve. They must meet the qualifications as stated in I Timothy 3. A Deacon serves under the eldership or Administrator and is appointed to a position of Trust. MCoC Members signify their confidence and trust in the individual by their nominating and vetting him to serve as a Deacon. Deacons shall always be men.

ADMINISTRATOR:

The Administrator shall report directly to Elders/Trustees. Specific duties are documented in a Position Description Document, maintained in the church office. The Administrator and Assistant Administrator serve (unpaid) at the pleasure of the elders.

PULPIT MINISTER

Position Description: Senior Pulpit Minister

Status: Full-time, Salaried

Benefits: Vacations, Housing Allowance, Professional Days

Specific duties are documented in the employment contract and maintained in the church office.

MINISTER FOR YOUTH AND FAMILY

Position Description: Minister for Youth and Family

Status: Full-time, Salaried

Benefits: Vacations, Housing Allowance, Professional Days

Specific duties are documented in the employment contract and maintained in the church office.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Position Description: Minister for Children

Status: Part-time, Salaried, one-year renewable contract

Benefits: None

Specific duties are documented in the employment contract and maintained in the church office.

SPANISH MINISTER

Position Description: Senior Spanish Minister

Status: Part-time, Salaried, one-year renewable contract

Benefits: None

Specific duties are documented in the employment contract and maintained in the church office.

NON-MINISTERIAL POSITION:

A “Non-Ministerial Position” may be occupied by Members who are tasked to perform duties that are not related to rituals, teaching and/or explaining MCoC beliefs or Policies.

SECRETARY

Position Description: Church Secretary

Status: Full-time, paid hourly

Benefits: Vacations, Professional Days

Specific duties are documented in the employment contract and maintained in the church office.

FINANCE ASSISTANT

Position Description: Assistant for Finance

Status: Part-time, paid hourly

Benefits: None

Specific duties are documented in the employment contract and maintained in the church office.

HOUSEKEEPING

Position Description: Janitorial Services

Status: Part-time, Contract labor

Benefits: None

Specific duties are documented in the employment contract and maintained in the church office.

APPENDIX 2: CHURCH FACILITY RESERVATION, USE REQUEST AND AGREEMENT

Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement:

Name of person or organization requesting use of facilities:

Please state whether you are a: Church Member Church-Sponsored
Ministry Non-Member Non-Member Group/Organization

Contact Information: Address:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

If the requested use is by an organization not affiliated with MCoC, please briefly state the organization's purpose and mission:

Please list the organization's website, if any:

Please list the names of the organization's office-holders and leaders:

Regardless of type of user, please describe which MCoC facilities you are requesting use of and the purpose for which you intend to use the facilities:

What date(s) and time(s) are you requesting to use the facilities:

If you are requesting use of the church's facilities for a wedding and/or wedding reception, please list the names and contact information of the bride and groom: (Include address and phone number).

Bride (One woman, gender at birth):

Groom (One man, gender at birth):

Please list the name, contact information, and religious affiliation of the person officiating the wedding:

Please describe the marriage preparation counseling or training undertaken by the bride and groom:

I affirm that:

1. I understand that MCoC does not allow its facilities to be used in a way that contradicts its faith or by persons or groups holding beliefs that contradict the MCoC Statement of Faith or Policies.
2. To the best of my knowledge the purpose for which I am requesting use of MCoC facilities will not contradict the church's faith, and I commit to promptly disclose any potential conflict of which I am aware or become aware to the Administrator or Office Staff.
3. I am not aware of any beliefs that are professed by the organization I represent and which is requesting use of MCoC facilities that contradict the beliefs of the church. I agree to promptly disclose any potential conflicts in belief to the MCoC Administrator or Office Staff.
4. I understand that upon approval of my facilities use request, I will provide a security deposit in the amount of (\$TBD) and may be required to provide a certificate of insurance for at least \$1,000,000 coverage, with MCoC named as an additional insured, and any other fees required by the church.
5. I understand that the church does not allow its facilities to be generally available to the public, and that the use of these facilities is subject to the MCoC Administrator's approval, which is conditioned in part on my agreement to the provisions in the "Church Facility Use Policy," a copy of which I have read and understand.
6. I understand that I will be responsible for any damages to the church facilities resulting from this proposed use of facilities.
7. MCoC believes disputes are to be worked out between parties without recourse to the courts. See, generally, Matthew Chapter 18 and 1 Corinthians Chapter 6.

Accordingly, users of the facility agree to attempt resolution of any disputes through Christian mediation. However, to avoid recourse to legal action, the matter shall be decided by a mutually agreed arbitrator.

Sign, date: