

THE SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

THE BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization shall be The Society of Christian Ethics.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of the Society shall be to promote scholarly work in the field of Christian ethics and in the relation of Christian ethics to other traditions of ethics and to social, economic, political, and cultural problems; to encourage and improve the teaching of these fields in colleges, universities and theological schools; and to provide a community of discourse and debate for those engaged professionally within these general fields.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1. Eligibility

Persons eligible for membership shall include (1) college, university, or seminary teachers of Christian ethics or social ethics; (2) persons teaching in similar institutions in other fields who are concerned with the relation of Christian ethics to their subject matter; and (3) persons whose full-time professional work in church, government, social agency or elsewhere is related to the purposes of the Society. A prerequisite for membership is at least one of the following: a Ph.D. or equivalent degree, scholarly publications in the above-named fields, or a full-time teaching position in ethics and/or related fields in an accredited institution of higher education.

Doctoral students in ethics or related fields may become members of the Society upon matriculation into a doctoral program. This status ordinarily may be retained for not more than ten years.

Section 2. Election to Membership

Membership in the Society shall be granted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Applications for membership shall be made in writing to the appropriate staff member, who shall present the same to the Board of Directors for its action.

Section 3. Conduct of Members in the Internal Scholarly and Organizational Activities of the Society

The Society will conduct all its business in a manner appropriate to its purposes (see Article II), and expects members to conduct themselves within the Society in a manner appropriate to the purposes of the Society. Achievement of those purposes -- the formation of a community of discourse, debate, and research which engages in scholarly work in and teaching of Christian ethics in relation to social,

economic, political, and cultural problems -- requires members to respect both the basic human dignity of all persons and the recognized social and political rights of individuals which proceed from that dignity. Society members, agents, or employees acting within the Society will therefore refrain from any form of harassment or unjust discrimination, in deed or word, based in race, sex, gender identity, age, nationality, ethnicity, religious community, sexual orientation, or physical condition. Respect for the work and property of others will exclude plagiarism, copyright infringement, and unacknowledged use of the research of others.

Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted to prohibit members of the Society from articulating the positions of their respective belief systems, religious traditions or ecclesial communions, nor shall this Article be interpreted to prohibit open and vigorous discussion of controversial issues by members of the Society, both within its meetings and elsewhere.

Section 4. Life Membership

Life Membership without payment of dues was granted by the Board of Directors to those who had retired and who had been members in good standing of the Society for at least 25 years. This practice was discontinued in January 2020. Those previously granted Life Membership status will continue to enjoy the benefit.

Section 5. Maintenance of Membership

Membership in the Society shall be maintained by payment of the annual dues. Membership shall be terminated by resignation or by failure to pay annual dues. Reinstatement of membership will automatically accompany the payment of annual dues.

Section 6. Dues

The Board of Directors shall set membership dues, which shall run for the calendar year.

Section 7. Termination of Membership for Cause

Membership in the Society may be terminated, suspended, or restricted for cause by vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board of Directors. The Board shall provide the members in question with no less than fifteen (15) days' prior written notice of the proposed expulsion, suspension, termination, or restriction and the reasons therefore. The Board shall also provide an opportunity for the members to be heard by the Board, orally or in writing, not less than five (5) days before the effective date of the expulsion, suspension, termination, or restriction. It shall be the responsibility of the President of the Society, working together with the other members of the Presidential Cabinet as defined in Article V, to formulate and implement further details of a procedure that is fair and reasonable given the circumstances of the case, including but not limited to its timing relative to the regularly scheduled meetings of the Board, and the geographic proximity of the member in question and the members of the Board. Nothing in this provision shall be construed to limit the right of the Society to terminate, suspend, or restrict membership for non-payment of dues.

ARTICLE IV

Meetings

The Society shall hold an Annual Meeting at a time and place to be determined by the Board of Directors or its Executive Committee (see Article VI), for the reading and discussing of scholarly papers, election of officers, and the conduct of the Society's official business. A quorum for conducting business at the Annual Meeting shall consist of a number of members equal to ten percent (10%) of the membership in the Society at the time of the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE V

Officers

The Officers of the Society are the President, the President Elect, the Vice President (who shall serve as Secretary), the Past President, and the Treasurer. Together, the President, the President Elect, the Vice President and the Past President shall constitute the Presidential Cabinet of the Society.

Section 1. President

The President-Elect shall automatically succeed to the presidency and shall serve for a term of one year commencing with the adjournment of the Annual Business Meeting of the Society. The President shall preside at the Annual Meeting and at the meetings of the Board of Directors, and shall receive, together with the Board, reports from the administrative staff and shall have and exercise such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board. The President shall customarily deliver a "Presidential Address" to the membership at the Annual Meeting.

Section 2. President Elect

The Vice President shall automatically succeed to the office of President Elect and shall serve for a term of one year commencing with the adjournment of the Annual Business Meeting of the Society. The President Elect shall be present at the Annual Meeting and at the meetings of the Board of Directors, shall receive, together with the Board, reports from the administrative staff and shall have and exercise such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board.

Section 3. Vice President

The Vice President shall serve for a term of one year commencing with the adjournment of the Annual Business Meeting of the Society. The Vice President shall be elected by a majority vote of members present and voting at the Annual Meeting of the Society. The Vice President shall be present at the Annual Meeting and at the meetings of the Board of Directors, shall receive, together with the Board, reports from the administrative staff and shall have and exercise such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board. The Vice President shall serve as the Secretary of the Society and shall have the responsibility of preparing the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors.

Section 4. Past President

After serving out the term, the retiring President shall automatically become Past President and serve as a member of the Board of Directors for a one-year term.

Section 5. Succession of Officers

At the close of the annual business meeting, the President becomes Past President, the President elect becomes President, the Vice President becomes President Elect, and a newly elected Vice President assumes office.

In the event of the temporary incapacity of an officer, the officer who is next in line for that office shall temporarily assume the duties of that office.

In the event of an incapacity lasting more than five months or coinciding with an annual meeting of the Society, or in the event of the resignation or death of an officer in the period between annual meetings, the following pattern of succession shall prevail:

- If the President is unable to serve, the President Elect becomes Acting President until the subsequent annual meeting. While the President Elect is serving as Acting President, the office of President Elect remains vacant. At the subsequent annual meeting the Acting President assumes the office of President at the close of the annual meeting, the Vice President becomes President Elect, and a newly elected Vice President assumes office.
- If the President Elect is unable to serve, the Vice President becomes President Elect until the subsequent annual meeting. When the Vice President assumes the office of President Elect under such circumstances, the office of Vice President remains vacant. The President Elect succeeds to the presidency at the next annual meeting, and the membership present and voting at the annual meeting will elect both a President Elect and a Vice-President.
- If the Vice President is unable to serve, the office shall remain vacant until the next Annual Meeting, at which both a Vice President and a president Elect will be elected. In the event and for the period that the Vice President is unable to act as secretary, the President Elect shall assume and perform the functions of the secretarial office.
- If the Past President is unable to serve, the office shall remain vacant until the current President succeeds to it at the end of her or his one-year presidential term.

During any period when the Presidential Cabinet comprises fewer than four members, the cabinet may redistribute duties as needed and may call upon senior members of the Board of Directors to assist.

Section 6. Staff

The Board, in consultation with the Presidential Cabinet, is empowered to hire staff for the administration of the Society. The Board shall present any substantial change to the society's administrative structure to the membership for approval at the annual meeting.

Section 7. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring an annual independent review of the financial accounts, investments, and records of the Society kept by management. At least annually, and as requested, the Treasurer will provide the Board of Directors with a copy and an interpretation of this review, as well as an assessment of management's recommendations regarding our investments and other financial matters. The Treasurer shall oversee management's preparation of financial reports and of all the filings required by the State of Tennessee, the Internal Revenue Service, and other government agencies. As requested by the Board and/or Executive Committee, the Treasurer attends Board and Executive Committee meetings, with voice but no vote.

ARTICLE VI

Board of Directors

Section 1. Membership

The Board of Directors shall consist of the following voting members: the Presidential Cabinet (President, the President Elect, the Vice President, the Past President); the Editor or Co-editors of the Journal; and twelve (12) other full members elected by majority vote of the members present and voting at the Annual Meeting to serve in classes of three for terms of four years. The Board of Directors shall also include as voting members two (2) student members who are elected by majority vote of the members present and voting at the Annual Meeting, serve staggered two-year terms, and release their seat on the Board if they graduate prior to the end of their term of service. The Treasurer attends all Board meetings with voice but no vote. A full member elected to the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting may be elected to another term, but only after an interval of at least one year. A student member elected to the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting may serve no more than one two-year term while a student member. The Board of Directors shall meet during the twenty-four hours prior to the Annual Meeting of the Society, and at such other times as the President shall convene them. The Board of Directors shall have power to act on all matters concerning the activities and business of the Society, shall authorize the expenditure of the Society's funds and provide for the proper auditing of its accounts, and shall have the power to act for the Society in all matters of policy and program between Annual Meetings. It shall present to the Annual Meeting a report of its actions, which report shall be subject to approval of the members present. Seven of the members shall constitute a quorum for the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Executive Committee

There shall be an Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, consisting of the Presidential Cabinet and at least two members of the Board of Directors appointed by the President. The Executive Committee shall meet annually in the spring to conduct the important business of the Society and shall otherwise advise the Board in the discharge of its responsibilities. The Executive Committee shall have power to act, if necessary, for the Board of Directors between its meetings. A quorum of the Executive Committee, defined as a simple majority of the appointed committee, is necessary for votes.

ARTICLE VII

Committees

Section 1. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors and shall include four other full members of the Society who are not members of the current Board of Directors but are present at the Annual Meeting at which their appointment is announced and one student member who is present at the Annual Meeting at which her or his appointment is announced. The Nominating Committee shall present to the membership at the subsequent Annual Meeting nominations to fill expiring terms and vacancies. Nominations for any office may also be made from the floor, provided those making nominations have secured the person's consent to be nominated.

The Nominating Committee shall oversee the election at the annual meeting, shall be responsible for counting the ballots, shall keep the ballots for a period of one year, and shall certify the legitimacy of the election.

Section 2. Program Committee

The Program Committee shall have authority to determine the content of the program of the SCE Annual Meeting, with the exception of the SCE plenary speakers and conference theme, which shall be chosen by the President. The Program Committee shall be chaired by the President and shall include the Presidential Cabinet (ex officio with voice and with vote) and one member (not necessarily a member of the Board) appointed by the president for that year only. The Program Committee shall also include the Editor or co-editors (ex officio with voice and with vote) and at least three additional members appointed by the President from the elected members of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors or, with the approval of the Board of Directors, the Program Committee itself, shall have the authority to include more participants in the selection process, provided that (1) the additional members be restricted to preliminary electronic voting only, (2) the additional members and the terms of their appointment shall be communicated to the membership as a whole, and (3) no less than 60 percent of the votes deciding the content of the program shall be cast by representatives elected directly by the membership as a whole. Weighted voting may be used.

Section 3. Other Committees

The President may appoint such other committees as are necessary or useful to conducting the work of the society.

ARTICLE VIII

Publications

Section 1. Authorization

The Society shall publish at least once each year a volume containing selected papers presented at the Annual Meeting, normally including the presidential address, and such professional materials as may be determined and arranged by the Editor or Co-editors and the Editorial Board charged with its planning and production.

Section 2. Name

This publication shall be called the *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, hereafter referred to as the Journal.

Section 3. Editor/Co-editors

An Editor or Co-editors shall be appointed by majority vote of the Board of Directors to serve a term of five years, following a search authorized by the Board of Directors and carried out by a search committee appointed by the President. The Editor or Co-editors, in consultation with the Editorial Board, shall be responsible for soliciting and selecting materials to be included in the Journal, for overseeing the publication process, and for supervising and assisting with promotion of sales. The Editor or Co-editors shall report on the work of the Journal to the membership through the Board of Directors and shall present to the Board of Directors an annual budget for publishing and publicizing the Journal.

Section 4. Editorial Board

An Editorial Board of no fewer than six (6) members shall advise and assist the Editor or Co-editors in the preparation and publication of the Journal. Members of this Board shall serve four-year staggered terms. They shall be appointed by the President of the Society in consultation with the Editor or Co-editors and the Board of Directors. Members of the Editorial Board may not serve simultaneously on the Board of Directors or in other elected offices of the Society.

Section 5. Paper Selection

At the discretion of the authors, papers presented at the Annual Meeting shall be considered for inclusion in the Journal. The Editor or Co-editors and the Editorial Board shall determine procedures and criteria for paper selection. They shall appoint additional persons to assist in the review and assessment of these papers. Final decisions on publication shall reside with the Editor or Co-editors, guided by the advice of the Editorial Board.

ARTICLE IX

Sections

Section 1. Authorization of Sections

The Board of Directors may authorize the formation of, and establish the boundaries of, regional sections of the Society. It may also revoke such authorization or redefine such boundaries.

Section 2. Membership and Section Officers

The membership of a section shall be drawn from members in good standing with the Society and who are resident within the boundaries of the regional section. Sections may elect whatever officers they deem appropriate. One officer shall be designated to provide an annual report to the Society's Board of Directors.

Section 3. Finances

The Board of Directors may allot funds to support the activities of sections when it is desirable to do so. No section shall levy additional membership dues.

Section 4. Meetings

Sections may arrange meetings at appropriate times, provided they do not conflict with the Annual Meeting of the Society.

ARTICLE X

Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended by vote of the majority of the members present and voting at the Annual Meeting. The Call to Meeting shall contain notice of any proposed amendment, and shall include a copy or summary of the amendment, and state the general nature of the amendment. The Board of Directors

shall discuss the proposed amendment at a meeting of the Board prior to the Annual Meeting, and shall take a consultative vote regarding whether it should be adopted, the results of which vote shall be presented by the President to the membership before the members vote on the proposed amendment at the Annual Meeting.

These By-Laws may also be amended by vote of the majority of the Board of Directors, which shall exercise this power between Annual Meetings only to make clerical changes to the By-Laws, or to make changes necessary to conform to applicable law or to protect fundamental legal or financial interests of the Society. In the event that the Board of Directors exercises this power to amend the By-Laws, it shall provide notice of the amendment and its rationale to the membership in the subsequent Call to Meeting.

Coda to the By-Laws

Society of Christian Ethics Declaration of Professional Commitments

The purpose of the Society of Christian Ethics is to promote scholarly work in the field of Christian ethics and in the relation of Christian ethics to other traditions of ethics and to social, economic, political, and cultural problems; to encourage and improve the teaching of these fields in colleges, universities and theological schools; and to provide a community of discourse and debate for those engaged professionally within these general fields (By-laws, Art. II). In pursuit of this purpose members of the Society have particular professional commitments and responsibilities.

As scholars in the field of ethics we hold ourselves to a standard of free, rigorous, and intellectually honest inquiry aiming to advance moral understanding, especially in regard to theologically informed perspectives. Our examination of moral issues shall respect the dignity of persons whose practices and positions we study. Likewise, our engagement with other disciplines and ethical and religious traditions shall be conducted with the aim of mutual learning and understanding. We seek to promote critical and constructive understandings of justice, the well being of society and the good of the wider creation.

As participants in institutions we will foster just relationships with their members and constituencies -- especially students, graduate assistants, colleagues, staff, clients, and patients -- as well as with the communities these institutions affect.

As educators we will strive to improve the methods and intellectual depth of our teaching. We will exercise our authority justly with concern for the development of our students, respecting their dignity and the boundaries appropriate to professional interaction.

As members of the Society we will conduct inquiry, debate and other interactions with colleagues openly, fairly, and respectfully. We will execute our duties competently and justly without prejudice toward those with different values and viewpoints. We will welcome and take action to ensure the full participation of new and junior members and those who bring new voices to our conversations.

In recent years we have become keenly aware that certain conduct so clearly affronts the dignity of persons that it contravenes the minimal conditions for participation in our profession. Accordingly, in activities that occur under the auspices of the Society we will neither practice nor tolerate any form of harassment or unjust discrimination, in deed or word, based on race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, religious community, sexual orientation, age, or physical condition. Neither will we practice nor tolerate plagiarism, copyright infringement, and unacknowledged use of the research of others. (Cf. By-laws, Art.

III, Sec. 3.) Persons who engage in such conduct within the Society's activities shall be subject to whatever grievance procedures the Society may adopt.

We will publicize these commitments and renew them by regular examination and revision.

Approved by the membership January 11, 2020.