

# CONSTITUTION

## Christian Women's Ministries

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### 1. NAME

Christian Women's Ministries (CWM)

### 2. MOTTO

Women in Service of Christ and His Church

### 3. VALUES

The CWM of the URCSA is founded upon the following values:

- 3.1 Faith in the Divine God (Father, Son and the Holy Spirit).
- 3.2 Patience and dedication to the service of God.
- 3.3 Humility and humbleness, in serving God and one another.
- 3.4 Love, goodness and care towards others.
- 3.5 Truthfulness, trustworthiness towards one another.
- 3.6 Respect for oneself and one another.

### 4. VISION

To be a Christian Women's Ministry that strives to be dynamic in *unity, reconciliation, justice and obedience*.<sup>1</sup>

### 5. MISSION

The mission of the CWM is to:

- 5.1 Worship, build the faith and the spirituality of women so that they can be faithful witnesses for Christ in the church and in the society, oppose that which is in conflict with the Christian faith both within and outside the church of Christ.
- 5.2 Work in partnership with other ministries within and with the church in its ecumenical relations in building a community of believers where the walls of gender, race, language and culture are demolished and equality acknowledged.

### 6. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the CWM are to:

- 6.1 Promote Christian belief and faithful living;
- 6.2 Pray together and for one another as women and families;
- 6.3 Encourage and empower women to care for the needy;
- 6.4 Encourage women to be faithful in formal worship and prayer meetings;
- 6.5 Encourage women to raise their children within the Christian faith, respect their parents and elders and to desire a Christian marriage;
- 6.6 Assist the Church in caring for creation.

### 7. CHURCH'S SUPERVISION

- 7.1 The CWM operates under the guidance and supervision of the Congregational Ministry of the local Church Council, Presbytery, Regional Synod and General Synod.

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<sup>1</sup> The vision reflects the four pillars of the Confession of Belhar [1986].

- 7.2 Any dispute with regard to the interpretation of the Constitution or relevant Bylaws of the CWM is subject to the adjudication of the relevant church authorities under whose jurisdiction such dispute may arise.
- 7.3 All members of the CWM are, with regard to doctrine and life, subject to the Church Order, Rules and Bylaws of the relevant Regional Synod as it pertains to the local congregation and applies to supervision, admonishment and discipline.
- 7.4 Each member has the right to appeal on any decision at the level of the Church Council, Presbytery or Regional Synod as may be applicable.

## **8. MEMBERSHIP**

### **8.1 Acquiring membership**

- 8.1.1 All confessing women members within the boundaries of a defined congregation of the URCSA, are by virtue of their faith connectedness to the congregation, as a body of Christ, part of the activities of the CWM.
- 8.1.2 Women shall, however, avail themselves for membership of the CWM at a meeting after they have been active participants for a minimum period of (6) six months.

### **8.2 Termination of membership**

- 8.2.1 Membership may be terminated by resigning as member of the CWM in writing.
- 8.2.2.1 Membership is terminated when a member contravenes the principles laid down in the CWM Constitution and guidelines, after successful interventions by the Church Council.
- 8.2.2.2 A member who does not actively participate in the activities of the CWM for three consecutive months, without a valid reason, terminates her membership automatically.

## **9. UNIFORM**

### **9.1 The uniform itself**

- 9.1.1 A black long sleeved, collar-less approved jacket and black approved knee length straight skirt with a closed back pleat.
- 9.1.2 A white semi-circle collar with an approved pin.
- 9.1.3 An approved black CWM hat.
- 9.1.4 Black shoes and black stockings.

### **9.2 Wearing of the uniform**

- 9.2.1 The wearing of the uniform will be determined by the CWM at Congregation Level.
- 9.2.2 Uniform must at all times be worn as prescribed above in 9.1.
- 9.2.3 Uniform will be worn at the following occasions:

- CWM prayer meetings;
- CWM Presbyterial Congress;
- Regional and General Synodical Congresses;
- Welcoming and farewell functions of leaders of the Church;
- Holy Communion and Baptism service and other church related functions;
- Official functions of ecumenical movement;
- Funeral of clothed members of the CWM and Church Council members.

- 9.2.4 Any member who has been suspended by the Church Council may not wear the uniform until the suspension has been lifted.

### **9.3 The Clothing Ceremony**

- 9.3.1 Only a CWM Minister's or Evangelist's wife in uniform will perform the clothing ceremony.
- 9.3.2 The CWM Minister's or Evangelist's wife in uniform is responsible for the clothing of a new CWM member or, if none are in uniform, the CWM executive with the church council of the said congregation will request the consulate's wife, provided she wears the uniform or another person of similar standing who wears the uniform to perform the clothing ceremony.
- 9.3.3 The member will be called to stand before the congregation.
- 9.3.4 The values, vision, mission and objectives are read from the Constitution, whereupon the member should respond in affirming subscription to it.
- 9.3.5 A text is read from the Bible.

## **10. FUNCTIONS OF THE CWM**

The CWM functions at the following levels:

### **10.1 Congregational Level**

10.1.1 The CWM Congregational comprises of:

- 10.1.1.1 An Executive Committee
- 10.1.1.2 A Congregational Committee
- 10.1.1.3 Congregational Wards

10.1.2 The CWM Executive Committee

- 10.1.2.1 The Executive Committee consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Vice-secretary, Treasurer and one Congregational Ministry representative.
- 10.1.2.2 The election of the Executive Committee takes place at an Annual General Meeting, preferably in April of each year.
- 10.1.2.3 The CWM Minister's or Evangelist's wife is automatically the President of the CWM Executive Committee, unless circumstances determine otherwise.
- 10.1.2.4 Where there are 2 or more CWM Minister's or Evangelist's wives, they will alternate the position of President.
- 10.1.2.5 The quorum at a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be half the members plus one.

10.1.3 CWM Congregational Committee

- 10.1.3.1 The Congregational Committee consists of the Executive Committee plus one or two ward leaders depending on the circumstances.
- 10.1.3.2 Each ward elects its own leaders at a ward meeting.
- 10.1.3.3 The Congregational Committee meets at least quarterly or whenever necessary and reports to the Church Council accordingly.
- 10.1.3.4 The quorum at a meeting shall be half the members plus one.

10.1.4 Term of Office

The term of office for the Congregational Committee is two years.

10.1.5 CWM Congregational Wards

- 10.1.5.1 The CWM will function according to the congregational ward system wherever possible.
- 10.1.5.2 The women's work in the wards integrates with the general activities of the wards and each ward reports to the Congregational Committee.

- 10.1.6 CWM Congregational General Meetings
- 10.1.6.1 General Meetings must be held at least quarterly or when necessary.
- 10.1.6.2 A general planning meeting is held at least once a year.
- 10.1.6.3 A Congregational Conference is held annually, preferably in April.
- 10.1.7 Establishment of new branches
- 10.1.7.1 A new branch of the CWM comes into being under the guidance and supervision of the local Church Council.
- 10.1.7.2 The Church Council invites the Presbytery CWM Executive Committee to establish a new branch.
- 10.1.7.3 The Presbytery CWM Executive Committee, in a general meeting of the members in that congregation, conducts the election of the Executive Committee of the new branch, once it is established.
- 10.1.7.4 The Presbytery CWM Secretary should inform the Chairperson of the Regional Synod CWM about the new branch.

## 10.2 **CWM Presbytery Level**

The CWM Presbytery functions under the guidance and supervision of the Presbytery Congregational ministry and reports accordingly.

- 10.2.1 CWM Presbytery Conference
- 10.2.1.1 The Presbytery CWM meets at least once a year at the Presbytery CWM Conference except for the year in which the Regional Synod CWM Congress takes place, in which case it constitutes at the Regional Synod CWM Congress.
- 10.2.1.2 The Chairperson's report and all the other activities of the Conference are discussed and approved by all the delegates.
- 10.2.1.3 Delegates give a report on all the activities of the Congress to members at their respective congregations.
- 10.2.2 The CWM Presbytery Committee
- 10.2.2.1 The Presbytery CWM Committee shall consist of two delegates from each congregation from amongst whom the Presbytery CWM Executive Committee is elected.
- 10.2.2.2 The Executive Committee comprises of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Vice-Secretary, Treasurer and one member from the Church's Presbytery Congregational Ministry.
- 10.2.2.3 The Executive Committee will be elected at the end of the Presbytery Conference, if local conditions necessitate it. The Executive Committee is elected from amongst Minister's and Evangelist's wives.
- 10.2.2.4 The quorum at a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be half the members plus one.
- 10.2.2.5 Duties and Responsibilities of the Presbyterial Committee:
- 10.2.2.5.1 **President**  
Conducts the Presbyterial Committee meeting and the CWM Presbyterial Conference in accordance to the prescripts for the convening, constituting and management of meetings in Regulation 1 – Rules of Order.<sup>2</sup>
- 10.2.2.5.2 **Vice-President**

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<sup>2</sup> Regulation 1 is to be found in the Church Order's of the Regional Synods and also in Chapter 3: "Procedure of the Meetings", in the General Synod Church Order.

- 10.2.2.5.2.1 The Vice-President assists the President in the execution of her tasks.
- 10.2.2.5.2.2 The Vice-President takes the place of the President in her absence.

#### 10.2.2.5.3 **Secretary**

- 10.2.2.5.3.1 Prepares the Agenda of all meetings in cooperation with the CWM the Presbyterial Committee.
- 10.2.2.5.3.2 Diligently takes minutes of all meetings and gatherings and executes decisions resorting under this office.
- 10.2.2.5.3.3 Manages all correspondence on behalf of the CWM Presbyterial Committee.
- 10.2.2.5.3.4 Prepares and presents the activity report to the CWM Presbyterial Committee, CWM Presbyterial conference and the Presbyterial congregational ministry report to the Presbytery.
- 10.2.2.5.3.5 Transfers all documentation and records belonging to this office to the new Secretary of the CWM Presbyterial Committee.
- 10.2.2.5.3.6 The secretary must take care of the secretarial equipment (Laptops; External hard drive and Printer) according to the asset policy of the CWM Regional Synod.
- 10.2.2.5.3.7 Archive all documentation and records belonging to the CWM Presbyterial Committee.

#### 10.2.2.5.4 **Treasurer**

- 10.2.2.5.4.1 Receives all monies of the CWM on Presbyterial level per receipt and deposits it in the CWM bank account.
- 10.2.2.5.4.2 This account will be transferred to the Presbytery boundaries where the treasurer resides.
- 10.2.2.5.4.3 Draws up a budget in consultation with the CWM Presbyterial Committee.
- 10.2.2.5.4.4 Diligently keeps record / accounting of all transactions and cheques for all approved payments.
- 10.2.2.5.4.5 Presents an audited financial report of the CWM Presbyterial to the CWM Presbyterial Conference and to the Presbyterial Congregational Ministry to report to the Presbyterial meeting.
- 10.2.2.5.4.6 Transfer all documentation and records belonging to this office together with an up to date audited report to the new Treasurer.
- 10.2.2.5.4.7 Archive all documentation and records belonging to the CWM Presbyterial Committee.

#### 10.2.3 Term of Office

The term of office for the Presbyterial Committee is two years.

### 10.3 **CWM Sub-Regions**

The provisions of these regulations and sub-regulations that are applicable to Regions shall apply, with the necessary amendments, to Sub-Regions in so far as no express provision is made hereunder.

#### 10.3.1 Composition

A Sub-Regional consists of more than one Presbytery which, as far as possible, form a geographical unit.

#### 10.3.2 Sub-Regional meetings

- 10.3.2.1 Sub-Regional Executive meets at least once per year to discuss the general activities at sub-Regional level.
- 10.3.2.2 Each CWM branch and Presbyterial Executive Committee in the Sub-Regional has one representative at the meeting. One member of the Presbyterial

Congregational Ministries shall have a seat at the meeting.

10.3.3 Sub-Regional Executive Composition

10.3.3.1 The Sub-Regional Executive Committee shall consist of the President, a Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer.

10.3.3.2 One representative from each Presbyterial Union Executive within the Sub-Region has a seat on the Sub-Regional Executive.

10.3.3.3 One member from the Presbyterial Congregational Ministries has a seat on the Sub-Regional Executive.

10.3.4 Sub-Regional Congress

10.3.4.1 *Frequency*

A Sub-Regional Congress takes place in the year before a Regional Congress.

10.3.4.2 *Representation*

10.3.4.2.1 Two representatives from each branch in the Sub-Region.

10.3.4.2.2 Two representative from each Congregational Executive within the Sub-Region.

10.3.4.2.3 Two representatives from each Presbyterial Executive within the Sub-Region.

10.3.4.2.4 One representative from each Presbyterial Congregational Ministries within the Sub-Region.

## 10.4 THE CWM Regional Synod Level

The CWM Regional Synod comprises of all congregational CWM's within the jurisdiction of the Regional Synod and functions under the guidance and supervision of the Church's Regional Synod Congregational Ministry.

10.4.1 Regional Synod CWM Congress

10.4.1.1 The CWM Regional Synod Congress is held every four years prior to the meeting of the Church's Regional Synod.

10.4.1.2 It comprises of two CWM representatives from each congregation.

10.4.1.3 The CWM of each congregation submits credentials to the CWM Regional Synod Secretary three weeks prior to the sitting of the CWM Regional Synod Congress.

10.4.1.4 Each congregation pays a congress fee approved by the CWM Regional Synod Committee.

10.4.1.5 Six weeks prior to the sitting of the Congress, the CWM Regional Synod Secretary should send the agenda as well as all reports to the representatives.

10.4.1.6 Three months after the Congress, the CWM Regional Synod Executive Committee should discuss the resolutions, reports and recommendations made at the Congress and present a full report thereof to the congregations as well as to the Regional Synod.

10.4.1.7 The Actuarius and one Congregational Ministry representative of the Regional Synod should attend the Congress in an advisory capacity.

10.4.1.8 The quorum at a Congress shall be half the members plus one.

10.4.2 CWM Regional Synod Executive Committee

10.4.2.1 The CWM Regional Synod Executive Committee comprises of the President (if local conditions necessitate, a Minister's /Evangelist's wife will be President), Vice-President, Secretary, Vice-Secretary, Treasurer and one representative from the Church's Regional Synod Congregational Ministry serves in an advisory capacity.

10.4.2.2 The CWM Regional Synod Executive Committee is elected at the congress.

10.4.2.3 The CWM Regional Synod Executive Committee members may not serve for more than two consecutive terms in the same portfolio.

10.4.2.4 If a vacancy occurs, the CWM Regional Synod Executive Committee calls a meeting of the CWM Regional Synod Committee, where a member is elected from the CWM Regional Synod Committee.

10.4.2.5 The quorum at a meeting shall be half the members plus one.

#### 10.4.3 The CWM Regional Synod Committee

10.4.3.1 The CWM Regional Synod Committee comprises of the CWM Regional Synod Executive Committee and not more than two representatives from each Presbytery.

10.4.3.2 The representatives report to the Presbytery Executive Committee.

10.4.3.3 The CWM Regional Synod Committee meets once a year.

10.4.3.4 The quorum at a meeting shall be half the members plus one.

#### 10.4.4 Duties and Responsibilities of the Regional Synod Committee:

##### 10.4.4.1 **President**

Conducts the Synodical Committee meeting and the CWM Synod Congress in accordance to the prescripts for the convening, constituting and management of meetings in Regulation 1 – Rules of Order.<sup>3</sup>

##### 10.4.4.2 **Vice-President**

10.4.4.2.1 The Vice-President assists the President in the execution of her tasks.

10.4.4.2.2 The Vice-President takes the place of the President in her absence.

##### 10.4.4.3 **Secretary**

10.4.4.3.1 Prepares the Agenda of all meetings in cooperation with the CWM the Regional Synodical Committee.

10.4.4.3.2 Diligently takes minutes of all meetings and gatherings and executes decisions resorting under this office.

10.4.4.3.3 Manages all correspondence on behalf of the CWM Regional Synod Committee.

10.4.4.3.4 Prepares and presents the activity report to the CWM Regional Synod Committee, CWM Regional Synod Congress and the Regional synod congregational ministry report to the synod.

10.4.4.3.5 Transfers all documentation and records belonging to this office to the new Secretary of the CWM Regional Synod Committee.

10.4.4.3.6 The secretary must take care of the secretarial equipment (Laptops; External hard drive and Printer) according to the asset policy of the CWM Regional Synod.

10.4.4.3.7 Archive all documentation and records belonging to the CWM Regional Synod Committee.

##### 10.4.4.4 **Treasurer**

10.4.4.4.1 Receives all monies of the CWM on Regional Synod level per receipt and deposits it in the CWM bank account.

10.4.4.4.2 This account will be transferred to the Regional boundaries where the treasurer resides.

10.4.4.4.3 Draws up a budget in consultation with the CWM Regional Synod Committee.

10.4.4.4.4 Diligently keeps record / accounting of all transactions and cheques for all approved payments.

10.4.4.4.5 Presents an audited financial report of the CWM Regional Synodical to the CWM Regional Synod Congress and to the Regional congregational ministry to report to the Regional Synod.

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<sup>3</sup> The same Rule 1 as mentioned in Footnote 2. See al section 10.5.8.1 below.

- 10.4.4.4.6 Transfer all documentation and records belonging to this office together with an up to date audited report to the new Treasurer.
- 10.4.4.4.7 Archive all documentation and records belonging to the CWM Regional Synod Committee.

## **10.5 THE CWM General Synod Level**

The CWM General Synod functions under the guidance and supervision of the Church's General Synod Congregational Ministry and reports accordingly.

### **10.5.1 The CWM General Synod Congress**

The CWM General Synod Congress comprises of:

- 10.5.1.1 Five representatives from each Presbytery within the different Regional Synods.
- 10.5.1.2 Five office bearers from each CWM Regional Synod Committee.
- 10.5.1.3 The Actuary and one Congregational Ministry representative of the General Synod should attend the Congress in an advisory capacity.

### **10.5.2 Meeting of the CWM General Synod Congress**

- 10.5.2.1 The Congress shall meet once in four years. This should happen before the General Synod.
- 10.5.2.2 English should be used as medium of communication. Translations should be from other languages to English if any other language is used.
- 10.5.2.3 All correspondence (written material) shall for the sake of national and international communication be in English only.
- 10.5.2.4 A Commission of Order shall be elected at every Congress to direct and advise on the business and order of the meeting.
- 10.5.2.5 The agenda and reports to Congress shall be distributed to all representatives at least one month before congress meets.
- 10.5.2.6 The CWM General Synod Committee together with members in the area where the Congress will be held is responsible for all physical arrangements pertaining to the meeting.
- 10.5.2.7 The CWM General Synod Committee will meet at least the day before the Congress to finalise the planning, order and flow of the meeting.

### **10.5.3 Hosting of the CWM General Synod Congress**

The hosting of the CWM General Synod Congress will rotate amongst the various Regional Synods.

### **10.5.4 CWM General Synod Committee**

- 10.5.4.1 CWM General Synod Committee consists of one representative from each CWM Regional Synod. This representative is elected at the CWM Regional Synod congress.
- 10.5.4.2 The elected member should be a member of the CWM Regional Synod Executive.
- 10.5.4.3 The Actuary of the General Synod should be consulted from time to time whenever his/her services are required.

### **10.5.5 CWM General Synod Committee Duties**

- 10.5.5.1 Execution of decisions of the CWM General Synod Congress.
- 10.5.5.2 Give guidance between congresses.
- 10.5.5.3 Approving of Congress minutes before dispatching it to regions.
- 10.5.5.4 To ensure that women are represented in religious publications.
- 10.5.5.5 To ensure that the objectives of the Constitution are implemented.
- 10.5.5.6 Distribution of information, reports and correspondence pertaining to women matters to the CWM Regional Synod.



- 10.5.5.7 To draw up a year programme with themes that promotes unity.
- 10.5.5.8 Represent CWM at national and international ecumenical and other related meetings.
- 10.5.6 Meetings of the CWM General Synod Committee  
The CWM General Synod Committee will meet at least once a year. During the year of Congress it will meet twice, one such meeting immediately preceding the congress.
- 10.5.7 CWM General Synod Executive Committee
- 10.5.7.1 The President, Vice-President, Secretary, Vice-Secretary, Treasurer are chosen at the CWM General Synod Congress out of the CWM General Synod Committee.
- 10.5.7.2 The CWM General Synod Executive Committee members (10.5.7.1) may not serve for more than two consecutive terms in the same portfolio.
- 10.5.7.3 Any vacancies are filled by the remaining CWM General Synod Committee members.
- 10.5.8 CWM General Synod Executive Committee Duties
- 10.5.8.1 **President**  
Conducts the General Synodical Committee meeting and the CWM General Synod Congress in accordance to the prescripts for the convening, constituting and management of meetings in Regulation 1 – Rules of Order.
- 10.5.8.2 **Vice-President**
- 10.5.8.2.1 The Vice-President assists the President in the execution of her tasks.
- 10.5.8.2.2 The Vice-President takes the place of the President in her absence.
- 10.5.8.3 **Secretary**
- 10.5.8.3.1 Prepares the Agenda of all meetings in cooperation with the CWM General Synod Committee.
- 10.5.8.3.2 Diligently takes minutes of all meetings and gatherings and executes decisions resorting under this office.
- 10.5.8.3.3 Manages all correspondence on behalf of the CWM General Synod Committee.
- 10.5.8.3.4 Prepares and presents the activity report to the CWM General Synod Committee, CWM General Synod Congress and the General Synod.
- 10.5.8.3.5 Transfers all documentation and records belonging to this office to the new Secretary of the CWM General Synod Committee.
- 10.5.8.3.6 Archive all documentation and records belonging to the CWM General Synod Committee.
- 10.5.8.4 **Treasurer**
- 10.5.8.4.1 Receives all monies of the CWM on General Synod level per receipt and deposits it in the CWM bank account. This account will be transferred to the Regional boundaries where the treasurer resides.
- 10.5.8.4.2 Draws up a budget in consultation with the CWM General Synod Committee.
- 10.5.8.4.3 Diligently keeps record / accounting of all transactions and cheques for all approved payments.
- 10.5.8.4.4 Presents an audited financial report of the CWM General Synodical to the CWM General Synod Congress and to the General Synod.
- 10.5.8.4.5 Transfer all documentation and records belonging to this office together with an up to date audited report to the new Treasurer.
- 10.5.8.4.6 Archive all documentation and records belonging to the CWM General Synod Committee.

## **11. FINANCES**

### **11.1 General Financial Management**

- 11.1.1 The levy will be determined by the different Congregations, Presbyteries, Regions according to their own circumstances.
- 11.1.2 The Treasurer at all levels will manage all CWM finances.
- 11.1.3 The signatories to all accounts will be any two of the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as a member of the CWM Regional Synod Executive Committee.
- 11.1.4 The Treasurers at all levels should submit their Annual Financial Reports to their respective levels as well as to the Congregational Ministry of the Church Council, Presbytery, Regional Synod and General Synod.

### **11.2 CWM General Synod**

- 11.2.1 The main source of income is contributions from the congregations via the CWM Regional Synod.
  - 11.2.1.1 The amount to be contributed by each congregation will from time to time be determined by the CWM General Synod Congress.
- 11.2.2 Every Congress appoints a Temporary Financial Committee to advise Congress on financial matters.

## **12. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

The CWM General Synod Congress may only amend the Constitution with a two-thirds majority subsequent to recommendations made by each CWM Regional Synod Congress. Amendments only become effective after approval by the General Synod.

