



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

September 15, 2025

To Community of Christ in the U.S.A.,

Greetings in the peace of Jesus Christ. This letter informs you that the Council of Twelve and First Presidency approved a new policy on Priesthood and Cohabitation for the United States. In short, living in a monogamous, cohabiting partnership is no longer an automatic reason to be disqualified from ordination or continued service in priesthood, as long as all other church policy expectations are met.

This change is the result of a faithful, multi-year journey. It included dialogue and prayerful discernment, as well as close policy review.

Important actions that led to this decision include:

- 2010: Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a–b was adopted. This passage changed the church's approach from rule-based restrictions to principle-based ethics. This emphasized Christ-like love, mutual respect, justice, covenant, and the worth of all people as guiding values for relationships and priesthood.
- 2016: A formal commentary reinforced this principle-based framework. It encouraged ethical discernment of circumstances over rigid rules in matters of sexual ethics, priesthood morality, and personal conduct.
- 2019: The First Presidency clarified that cohabitation outside of marriage was not compatible with priesthood status under the existing policy. They also announced a comprehensive review in collaboration with the Standing High Council and World Church Leadership Council.
- 2023: World Conference Resolution (WCR) 1327 was passed. It affirms marriage as a sacred covenant and authorizing apostles to define marriage-related policies within cultural contexts. This resolution laid the groundwork for field-level adaptations.
- 2023–2024: During an interim period in the USA, priesthood members were not released for cohabiting, but new calls were paused. This allowed time to gather feedback from leaders and members on how their ministry is received and discern a response.
- February 2025: A national survey of USA members revealed that about 75% expressed full or moderate support for recognizing monogamous, committed cohabiting relationships as compatible with priesthood ministry.
- 2025: Based on this feedback and the authority granted by WCR 1327, the Council of Twelve and First Presidency enacted the new policy without requiring a national conference vote.

This policy affirms the principles of covenant, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, and Christ-like love as foundational to all relationships. These values are rooted in Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a and the Enduring Principles. They guide ethical relationships and priesthood morality. The policy reflects the

USA FIELD APOSTLES

Matthew Frizzell • Kat Hnatyshyn • Richard CN James • Lachlan Mackay • Shannon McAdam • Carrie Welch

evolving cultural and ethical context in which we live and minister. It also upholds Community of Christ's ethical standards and sacred stewardship expected of priesthood members.

We recognize that members across the USA will receive this news with a range of responses. Organizational change is rarely easy—but it can be deeply faithful. We remain committed to open and respectful dialogue as we walk together in faith.

For questions about how the new policy may apply to individual circumstances, please contact your pastor or mission center president.

Your Companions on the Journey,

Apostles supporting the church in the USA Field,
Matthew Frizzell
Kat Hnatyshyn
Richard James
Lachlan Mackay
Shannon McAdam
Carrie Welch