

**Constitution  
of  
Chinese Christian Church of Columbia  
South Carolina**

**ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this church shall be the Chinese Christian Church of Columbia.

**ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church is to glorify God. To this end it exists for: the worship and service of God; the teaching of His Word; the proclamation of His saving grace; the building up, fellowship, and discipline of those who believe the Son; the practice of holiness without which no one shall see God; and the rendering of compassionate service to all regardless of social class or race.

**ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and that they are inspired of God, inerrant in the original writings, and of supreme and final authority in faith and life ( II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:21; Psalms 119:89; John 12:47-48; Rev. 22:19 ).

We believe in one God existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, coequal and eternal ( Gen. 1:1, 26-27; Isa. 44:6; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; Deut. 6:4 ).

We believe that man was created in the Image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, show themselves to be sinners in thought, word, and deed ( Gen. 1:27; Rom. 1:18, 3:23, 5:12; Psalms 51:5 ).

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true Man ( Matt. 1:18, 22-23; John 1:14; Phil. 2:6-7 ).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood ( Rom. 5:8, 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9 ).

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His Ascension in the heavens and in His present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate ( I Cor. 15:1-4; Acts 1:9; Heb. 7:22-25 ).

We believe in the blessed hope, the personal and visible return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to reign ( Acts 1:11; I Thess 3:13, 4:14-17; Rev. 19:7, 20:15 ).

We believe that all who are born again of the Holy Spirit receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby become children of God ( John 1:12-13, 3:3, 5, 7 ).

We believe in the eternal security and everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the eternal conscious punishment of the lost ( John 3:16-18; I John 5:11-13; Rev. 20:15; Mark 9:48 ).

We believe that Christ instituted the ordinance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, to be observed until He comes ( Matt. 26:26-29; I Cor. 11:23-26; Matt. 28:19-20 ).

**ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in this church shall be based upon an individual personal acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Each candidate for membership should be able to give a testimony of faith in Christ and a desire to live a consistent Christian life. The candidate should be baptized, if not baptized previously. Such persons show evidence of a satisfactory attitude toward the

doctrinal standards of this church and its Constitution and be willing to be in submission to the church. The church through its officers shall examine and receive candidates for membership upon affirmation of their faith.

ARTICLE V: GOVERNMENT

This church recognizes Jesus Christ as the Head and supreme authority for all its actions and functions. Under Christ the government of this church shall be vested in its members acting through an Executive Board which consists of pastor(s), elders and deacons. In all matters, the goal shall be to function by consensus of opinion and in unity, seeking to know and follow the mind of Christ.

ARTICLE VI: AFFILIATION

This church shall be organizationally unaffiliated with any denomination. However, fellowship and cooperation with other churches and groups of like faith and purpose shall be encouraged.

ARTICLE VII: DISSOLUTION

This church is organized exclusively for religious, educational, and charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. If this organization is ever dissolved, all the assets thereof shall be transferred to an organization or organizations organized exclusively for religious, educational, and charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code as it now exists, or as it may be amended. The provisions of this article shall remain irrevocable.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended only by 3/4 of the members present and voting at a meeting duly called and announced at least 4 weeks before, provided that the subject for change is announced in writing.

*( The latest amendments to the Constitution were made during the Annual Congregational Meeting on December 4, 1994. )*

**By-Laws  
of  
Chinese Christian Church of Columbia  
South Carolina**

The by-laws are established in accordance with the Constitution of the Chinese Christian Church of Columbia as standards for the administration of the ministry of the church.

**ARTICLE I: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

*1.1 Qualifications*

Church membership is an expression of a believer's loyalty to a church in a particular locality. A person qualified for membership in the Chinese Christian Church of Columbia must be one who:

- (1) confesses Jesus Christ to be his / her Savior and Lord and has shown satisfactory evidence of the new life in Christ in his / her daily life;
- (2) has been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit;
- (3) has attended the church regularly for the past 3 months;
- (4) is in general agreement with the purpose, direction, administration, and discipline of the church; and
- (5) is of age 16 or older.

*1.2 Responsibilities of Members*

Each member should:

- (1) desire to share the responsibility of maintaining and developing of the church through regular attendance and frequent prayer, financial giving, and whatever ministries the Lord enables;
- (2) maintain a regular daily devotional time in Bible reading and prayer to seek God's will and blessings both for his / her individual life and for the church and its leaders;
- (3) regularly ask the Lord to help him / her and all members to grow in obedience in all areas of life, especially in the love for one another and fulfillment of the Great Commission; and
- (4) actively participate in the decision making process in membership meetings.

*1.3 Procedure of Application for Membership*

One who desires membership in the church must complete an application form from the church for this purpose. He / she will be interviewed by the pastor & representatives from the Executive Board. Successful applicants will be introduced to the congregation within two weeks. Membership privileges will begin following the introduction.

*1.4 Church Discipline*

If the life or conduct of a member is contrary to the Word of God, he / she may be asked by the pastor and the elders ( or deacons should there be absence of elders ) for explanation, and disciplinary action in accordance with the principles set forth in the Bible may be taken.

*1.5 Termination of Membership*

A member may withdraw his / her membership voluntarily by giving notice to the Executive Board.

If a member has moved permanently out of this locality, his / her membership will be terminated. Such person is encouraged to affiliate himself with a church of like faith and practice in his / her new locality.

If a member is absent from the worship service of the church for one year in succession, or has failed to keep up with the membership qualifications, his / her membership shall be terminated.

*1.6 Types of Church Membership*

Church membership at the Chinese Christian Church of Columbia shall be either Full Membership or Associate Membership. Full Membership is given those who desire

membership at the Chinese Christian Church of Columbia. Associate Membership is reserved for individuals with all of the following conditions: 1) one who is in Columbia for a short-term, 2) one whose home church is outside the Columbia Metropolitan area, 3) one whose desire is to be a member in the ministry of the Chinese Christian Church of Columbia, and 4) one whose home church does not allow membership in any other church, with the exception being an Associate Membership. Full Members and Associate Members have the same membership privileges.

## ARTICLE II : ORDINANCES

### *2.1 Baptism*

Baptism by immersion, or sprinkling, or pouring is recognized as a scriptural ordinance to signify the union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. However, baptism by immersion is to be practiced in this church whenever possible. Those who are baptized in this church and meet the qualifications in Article I.1.1 of the By-Laws will become members. Those with circumstances that would not allow participation as a member of the church may receive exemption from membership as approved by the Executive Board.

### *2.2 The Lord's Supper (Communion)*

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper (Communion) shall be observed regularly. Everyone who is redeemed by the blood of Christ and has received baptism is welcome, but believers should be advised to participate after self-examination.

## ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

### *3.1 Annual Meeting*

A membership meeting should be conducted on the first or second Sunday of December every year, to elect officers, to receive ministerial and financial reports from the boards, and to pray, to seek the will of the Lord and consider matters concerning the church as a whole, such as the calling of a pastor, the securing of a new church building, etc.

The date, the agenda, and the proposals should be announced and posted by the Executive Board 3 weeks before the meeting. Other proposals and amendments must be submitted to the Board at least 2 weeks before the meeting by 2 or more members. These proposals shall be posted by the Board, along with whatever counter-proposals or amendments the Board may have, at least 1 week before the meeting.

### *3.2 Special Meetings*

Special membership meetings may be called by the Executive Board whenever the Board considers it necessary and should be announced at least 2 weeks before the meeting. In case of an emergency, the Board may call a meeting in less than 2 weeks.

### *3.3 Quorum & Voting*

A Quorum shall be a simple majority of the church membership. If a quorum is not met, the meeting may adjourn to a stated time at least two weeks later. Notice of the adjournment shall be announced and posted on the intervening Sunday(s). If a quorum cannot be met after three trials, the proposal will be dropped.

## ARTICLE IV: GOVERNMENT

### *4.1 Executive Board*

The Executive Board shall consist of the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons with one of the lay elders acting as the chairperson. In the absence of elder, a selected deacon will serve as chairperson. The chairperson will assist the pastor in planning and execution of church ministries. The chairperson will also conduct board meetings.

The Board shall hold monthly meetings for prayer and business, and shall report to the members of the church annually and at whatever time the need may arise.

The quorum of the regular monthly Executive Board meeting shall be 75% of active Board members. The term active Board members refers to those who were duly elected to serve on the Board and are expected to be able and willing to continue in their duties as Board members without impairment. The quorum of any Executive Board meeting including special meetings called for special discussions shall also be 75% of active Board members. A special Board meeting requires three (3) days advanced notice to be legitimate.

Emergency Board meetings may be called without advanced notification when there is an emergency situation. Examples of emergency situations include high likelihood of severe impairment to church interest upon inaction, such impairment may include high probability of harm or danger to life or safety of individuals, or high probability of significant loss in value or substantial damages to properties, or other significant adverse events. Emergency meetings can be held over telephone or other reasonable means of communication.

Quorum for emergency meeting is either (a) two Board members with one of them being either a pastor or chairperson of the Board, or (b) if neither a pastor nor chairperson of the Board is available, the quorum for emergency meeting shall be three Board members.

Decisions made during emergency meeting need to be unanimous to be legitimate. Active Board members who did not participate in the emergency meeting are to be informed about the called emergency meeting and any decision(s) made, such information may be conveyed by any reasonable means of communication, e.g. e-mail or telephone, if practically possible, within a reasonable time period. Decisions made during emergency meetings are to be ratified during next regular Board meeting if possible. Decisions made during emergency meeting may also be modified during subsequent regular Board meeting as situation changes or there are differing opinions.

Penalty for abuse of emergency meeting provision shall include removal from Board membership, while other consequences may also apply. Determination of abuse of emergency meeting provision may be made by 75% vote of the attendance in a legitimate Board meeting. Such may also decide to impose additional consequences.

#### *4.2 Board of Elders*

The Board of Elders shall consist of a minimum of two lay elders and the pastor(s). Elder candidates can be nominated by the Board of Elders or by a church member together with 4 other members from different households, according to biblical qualifications. Candidates shall be carefully examined by the Board of Elders as to their qualifications. Then, candidates are individually confirmed by a 3/4 vote in a membership meeting, provided that the total affirmative votes are cast by more than 50% of the membership. Elders thus confirmed are ordained by the pastor(s) and the existing elders to the general overseeing responsibility of the church.

Elders are to oversee the congregation and to be responsible for the spiritual nurture and growth of the flock. They are to be directly involved in the planning of the direction of the church, and oversee the Board of Deacons in the administration of church ministries. The Board of Elders shall meet regularly for the evaluation of church ministries with respect to overall goals and direction. They are responsible for the determination of membership, and when necessary, to discipline members for the sake of restoration. They shall also supervise the final budgeting of the church.

Elders shall serve in the Board of Elders on a three-year rotational basis. All inactive elders remain as resource persons to the Board. A special period of prayer by the whole church shall be conducted before the election of new elders.

Owing to ill health, moving out of the locality or other personal reasons, an elder may resign from active service.

It shall be within the power of the Board of Elders to recommend to the congregation to revoke the ordination credentials of any person found guilty of doctrinal heresy or immoral conduct. Such a recommendation shall be confirmed by 3/4 votes of a membership meeting.

#### *4.3 Board of Deacons*

A minimum of five deacons are confirmed according to Biblical qualifications to serve in the Executive Board. They shall be assigned to specific offices in order to assist the pastor or elder(s) in the administration of church ministries. The nomination of deacons shall be

determined by a Nomination Committee which consists of the pastor, one elder, one deacon and a church member representative who is approved by a simple majority in a membership meeting. Further nomination of deacons from congregation may be submitted by two or more church members to the Executive Board for examination according to the same qualifications set forth.

Deacons are confirmed by 3/4 vote in a membership meeting. Following three consecutive terms of service (1 year term), a deacon is recommended to rest for one year.

#### *4.4 Pastor*

The pastor is to oversee the complete ministry of the church. He is an ex-officio member of all Boards and Committees. He must accept the responsibility as from the Lord to equip the believers through preaching, teaching, training and shepherding for the work of the Gospel ministry and for the edification and upbuilding of the Body of Christ. He must meet the qualifications of an Elder as stated in I Timothy 3:1-7. He shall serve as the chairman of the Board of Elders. The Executive Board shall provide feedback to the pastor regarding his ministry every year.

In case of a vacancy, the Executive Board shall appoint a Pastoral Search Committee to search for prospective candidates who are called to the ministry, meet the scriptural qualifications of a teaching elder, and be able to carry out the stated purpose of the church. The Pastoral Search Committee should consist of representatives from the present Executive Board and from the congregation. 1/2 affirmative votes in a membership meeting are required for this Pastoral Search Committee. The choice of the pastoral candidate should be confirmed by 3/4 votes in a membership meeting, provided that the total affirmative votes exceed 50% of the membership. A special period of prayer by the whole church shall be conducted before that special meeting.

A renewable contract shall be entered between the pastor and the church specifying the terms of office for two to five years. The contract shall be recommended by the Executive Board and confirmed by at least 2/3 affirmative votes in a membership meeting.

Resignation of the pastor requires at least a six month notice to the Executive Board, unless he is asked to resign by the Executive Board and 3/4 votes of all members due to heretical teaching, or life and testimony contrary to the Word of God.

The church may ordain pastor(s) if such a need arises. The candidate(s) must have served in the church for at least one year and have the recommendation of the Executive Board and affirmative votes of at least 3/4 of quorum provided that the total affirmative votes exceed 50% of membership. The Board shall then invite at least three pastors, one Executive Board representative, and one congregationally approved church member representative to form an examination board to examine the candidate's faith and gifts. After the examination board has given its approval, arrangements for ordination shall be made.

#### *4.5 General Guidelines*

In the event that the number of elders has fallen below the minimum required, or that the pastor's position is vacant, special committee(s) shall be created by the Executive Board to temporarily take up the needed responsibilities.

### ARTICLE V: OFFICES & OFFICERS

The main responsibilities of the various offices are as follows:

#### *5.1 Chairperson*

The chairperson is responsible for convening and presiding over the meetings of the Executive Board. The individual, together with the Executive Board, will draw up the agenda for such meetings and co-ordinates the efforts of all the offices.

#### *5.2 Worship*

This office is responsible for all matters pertaining to Sunday worship such as music and choir, to prayer meetings, retreats and other special meetings.

### *5.3 Christian Education*

This office is responsible for all the planning and activities pertaining to Christian Education, including Nursery, Sunday School, Junior Church, and Vacation Bible School.

### *5.4 Evangelism*

This office is responsible for the planning, education, promotion, training, and execution of evangelistic efforts, including personal evangelism, evangelistic meetings, evangelistic literature, etc.

### *5.5 Missions*

This office is responsible for overseeing all missions efforts, mission conferences, missions policy, missionary training, missionary support, administration of missions education, and promotion of missions locally, regionally and internationally.

### *5.6 Fellowship*

This office is responsible for overseeing different fellowship groups of the church ( e.g. ladies' fellowship, family fellowship and youth group ).

### *5.7 Clerk*

This office is responsible for writing the minutes of the general meetings and the meetings of the Executive Board, keeping the records of the membership of the whole church, the publication of the church directory, the sending of church circulars and letters to members notifying them to attend meetings, and the safekeeping of the relevant documents belonging to the church.

### *5.8 Treasurer*

The treasurer keeps the accounts of the church, takes care of the offering from the congregation, publishes monthly statements of income and expenditure and draws up the church budget. When the year is over, the treasurer must publish a clear account of the amount of offering and expenditure of the whole year. In the absence of the treasurer, the clerk will temporarily take up the position. The treasurer may utilize a bookkeeper to keep books and generate reports. Said bookkeeper is to be approved by the Board and the bookkeeper is not to have any access to information or records related to offerings from individuals.

### *5.9 General Service*

This office supports the work of other offices, supervises meals, provides maintenance for church possessions other than land and building, prepares venue for meetings, cleans up venue after meetings and makes necessary purchases for above purposes.

### *5.10 Building and Grounds*

This office is responsible for the maintenance of the land and building structure of the church.

The officers are to be elected among the members of the Executive Board. An officer may assume more than one office if needed.

## ARTICLE VI:

### FINANCE

The church ministry shall be supported by the tithes and the free-will offerings to the Lord. Regular tithing and cheerful giving as unto the Lord encouraged. There shall be no solicitation of money from non-believers (Prov. 15:8). God's work, done in God's way, shall never lack God's supply (2 Cor. 9:8, Phil 4:19).

## ARTICLE VII:

### CHURCH PROPERTIES

Church properties include all the real estate and possessions which are legally owned by the church.

Church properties shall be used for church purposes and activities, and shall not be loaned to any person or organization for any other purpose without the approval of the Executive Board.

Use of church properties and their maintenance are administered by the departments of General Service and Building and Grounds.

Any purchase or sale of church real estate requires a recommendation from the Executive Board and a 3/4 vote approval in a membership meeting provided that the total affirmative votes exceed 50% of the membership.

ARTICLE VIII: SPECIAL PROVISION

The Executive Board has the final authority to address special situations not stated in the by-laws.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

All proposals are to be posted 2 weeks before the membership meeting for such purpose. Proposals from church members consisting of at least 3 voting members from different families should be presented to the Executive Board in writing 4 weeks before the membership meeting. Any amendment requires a 3/4 vote of approval in a membership meeting.

*( The latest amendment to the By-Laws was made during a Congregational Meeting on December 5, 2004. )*