

# **CONSTITUTION OF THE FIRST CHINESE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN HAWAII**

## **ARTICLE I. NAME**

This Church shall be known as The First Chinese of Church of Christ in Hawaii.

## **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Church shall be: to worship God; to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and to realize Christian Fellowship and Unity with the Church Universal.

## **ARTICLE III. COVENANT**

We believe in the freedom of the individual conscience to interpret Biblical truths under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As an expression of our common faith we subscribe to the following:

“We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God, profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. We believe in the Triune God as expressed in the Apostles’ Creed that there is one Godhead, he is eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe that all men have a soul and that would must be redeemed by the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ before we can enjoy the rich and abundant life here on earthy and eternal life to come. We believe in preaching the Gospel without ceasing until all men are brought to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

## **ARTICLE IV. POLITY**

This Church is a part of the Universal Church of Christ, founded by the Holy Spirit, built upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ being the Cornerstone. As such in all matters of faith and conduct, we humbly seek his divine guidance.

As a congregation of believers, we are self-governing, with final authority vested in our membership. This church has accepted the privileges and obligations in free association with the United Church of Christ. We pledge to share their common aims, work and united action.

## **ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP**

Any person age twelve years or older, who has truly repented, has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, and has been baptized with water, may become a

member of this church. Membership shall be continuous from the date of admission until termination or otherwise, modified by proper procedure.

#### **ARTICLE VI. LIFE AND WORK**

This Church shall be organized for the conduct of its life in such ways as may be determined by the members; it shall hold such regular meetings and worship services as may be deemed desirable; it shall plan for and conduct other activities for the furtherance and extension of the faith it holds; and shall in any other way laid down by its members establish its life and work. In these matters the Church shall be guided by the principles laid down in its Covenant.

#### **ARTICLE VII. AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended by the concurring vote of not less than two-thirds of the Church members present at an annual meeting or other designated meeting, providing that a statement of the proposed amendment shall have been posted and public announcement of the text shall have been made at least two weeks prior to the time of the scheduled meeting.

#### **ARTICLE VIII. BY-LAWS**

Concurrent with the adoption of this Constitution, the Congregation shall adopt by-laws under which the operations and administration of the Church as a legal entity shall be governed. Amendment of change in such by-laws shall be made in the same manner as shall be amendments to this Constitution.

The First Chinese Church of Christ in Hawaii  
Approved BY-LAWS (as amended – November 8, 2009)

**ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Admission by Confession of Faith and Baptism. Any person desiring baptism and admission to membership in First Chinese Church of Christ shall complete a formal course of instruction in the fundamentals of the Christian faith. After completion of such course and upon recommendation of the pastor, the candidate shall be presented to the Church Board for consideration for membership. Upon favorable consideration by the Church Board, then baptism shall be administered to the candidate and the congregation shall be asked to accept the candidate as a new member.
- B. Admission by Letter. Any person who has received baptism in another church and wished to join this church shall present a certificate of church membership or a letter of recommendation to the pastor. After examination of the individual or letter, the pastor shall present such certificate or letter to the Church board for its review and recommendation. Upon favorable consideration, the Church Board shall recommend that the congregation accept the candidate as a new member.
- C. Confirmation. When an individual who has been baptized as an infant reaches the age of twelve years or older, he shall be instructed by the pastor in the fundamentals of the Christian faith. After completion of the prescribed course of study, such individual may be presented by the pastor to the Church Board as a candidate for church membership. Upon favorable consideration, the Church Board shall recommend that the Congregation accept the candidate as a regular member of the church.
- D. Transfer of Membership. Upon request, a member may be granted a letter of transfer to another church.
- E. Discipline. In the event that a member shall become by immoral conduct an offense to the Church, upon recommendation of its Church Board, the Congregation may censure such member, suspend him or terminate his membership by a two-thirds vote at a duly called Congregational meeting; providing that faithful efforts have been made by the pastor and the Church Board, to bring such member to amendment in accordance with the laws of Christ (Matthew 18:15-17); and further that due notice and hearing to that member shall have been afforded.

Termination of membership (Except by letter) shall not occur at the meeting in which recommendation for such action is first made.

## **ARTICLE II. SERVICES AND CEREMONIES**

- A. Services of worship shall be held at given times each Sunday and at such other times as may be prescribed by the Church Board. Scheduled services may be temporarily suspended by the Church Board.

The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month, and at such other times as may be ordered by the Church Board.

The baptism of adults and the baptism or dedication of children shall be administered at such time as the pastor may appoint.

Other services for inspiration, prayer and instruction may be held at such times as determined by the Church Board.

- B. Ceremonies.

Adult Baptism is an outward sign of inward grace, signifying that one is born again by his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, persons wishing to become a member of this Church must receive baptism in accordance with the Lord's commandment.

Baptism and Dedication of Children. Any child under the age of twelve, whose parents are Christians, may be baptized or dedicated by the pastor. If either parent is not a Christian, the administration of this sacrament must be rendered with utmost care. Baptism is with consecrated water. Dedication is without consecrated water.

Confirmation. All baptized children shall be instructed by their parents in the Word of God and in the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. They should be sent to Church school to receive more Christian nurture. At the age of twelve or older, they may receive confirmation and become an active member of this Church.

The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a symbol of Christ's sacrifice in behalf of all believers. All members should partake of it. Other adults, who are members of other Churches, shall be invited to share in this memorial to Christ.

Wedding Ceremony. Weddings taking place in this Church shall be Christian and conform to rules which may be established by the Church Board.

Funerals. All funeral services held in this Church shall be Christian and shall conform to rules which may be established by the Church Board.

### **ARTICLE III. GOVERNING BODY**

- A. The governing body of this Church shall be the membership assembled in congregational meeting. The vote of a majority of members present at the meeting shall be the action of the Church.
- B. The congregational meeting shall be attended by members of the Church. There shall be no fixed number to constitute a quorum and no fixed dates for meetings except for the date of annual meeting for election of members of the Church Board. When there are matters which need to be acted upon by the congregation, then a meeting shall be called. The call for a meeting must be publicized two weeks in advance with the purpose of the meeting stated.

The Chairman of the Church Board while presiding at a congregational meeting shall be titled Moderator.

If a minimum of thirty members petition in writing for a special meeting, the Chairman of the Church board shall call a meeting of the congregation.

Congregational meetings shall be called to: (1) call a pastor; (2) call members of the pastoral staff; (3) elect members of the Church Board; and (4) discuss and make decisions for the perfecting of the Church organization.

### **ARTICLE IV. THE CHURCH BOARD**

- A. The Church Board shall be the policy-making body and shall transact the business of the Church. It shall be the duty of the Board to supervise the administration of Church affairs, to set an example to the members of the congregation, and to assist in the administration of the sacraments. In the event that the pastor is unable to conduct church services, the Chairman of the Church Board shall temporarily take his place, or the Church board shall invite someone in his place.
- B. The Church Board shall meet at least once every month for the transaction of Church business. Special meetings may be called by its Chairman. At the written request of a minimum of three members of the board or ten members of the congregation, the Chairman of the Church Board shall convene a special meeting to consider special matters. Within a reasonable period following each meeting of the Church Board, the secretary to the Church Board shall post on a Church Bulletin Board a report of the decisions or minutes of that meeting.

A quorum shall be a majority of the members of the Board. There shall be no vote by proxy.

C. The Church Board shall organize itself each year, electing a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and shall appoint the remaining members to the chairmanship of the standing committees of the Church Board, except as may otherwise be provided for by these by-laws.

1. Executive Committee. There shall be an Executive Committee of four members. These members shall consist of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer of the Church Board. The Executive Committee shall be presided over by the Chairman of the Board and shall meet upon his call.

In the interim between meetings of the Church Board with such powers as may be delegated to it by the Church Board, the Executive Committee shall act for the Church Board.

2. Standing Committees. The Church Board shall be organized into the following standing committees: **Worship; Instruction; Fellowship; Evangelism; Administration; Building and Grounds; Finance; and Preschool.**

**The responsibilities of each committee shall be determined by the Church Board. The membership of each committee shall consist of Church Board members and members of the Congregation.** (December 1, 2002; November 8, 2009)

3. Ad Hoc Committees. The Chairman of the Board may appoint, as may be required, temporary committees on specific subject matter. These committees shall have a term no longer than the Church Board during whose term they shall have been appointed.

D. The members of the Church shall elect eighteen persons to serve as members of the Church Board. They shall serve for three year terms. These members shall be equally divided into three election groups. Beginning with the 1990 election, six members shall be elected annually to the Board. Members serving on the Church Board in 1990 shall complete the terms of office for which they have been previously elected.

**Members shall serve a term limit of two (2) consecutive terms (6 years). A member may serve again after a one year break in service. Board members completing two (2) or more consecutive terms by the end of the calendar year 2003, shall take a one (1) year break in service.** (December 1, 2002)

1. Election. At every election, a minimum of six candidates shall be nominated by the Church Board. Candidates for the Church Board may also be nominated by a petition of twenty five or more

members filled one week prior to the date of the Church Board election.

Any member of this Church may be nominated as a Church Board member.

All members of this Church shall be eligible to vote. The election to the Church Board shall be held annually after the worship service on the first Sunday in November. The names of candidates nominated by the Church Board shall be announced no less than two Sundays prior to the election. Elections shall be by secret ballot. In the event of a tie, the Chairman of the Church Board shall cast the deciding ballot.

2. Installation. The Church Board shall begin its term of office on the first Sunday of January after its installation.
3. Resignations and Vacancies. In the event that a Church Board member is unable to complete his term of office, he shall inform the Board of his decision along with the reasons for his resignation. The Church Board shall accept the resignation, and fill the vacancy with the candidate at the last annual election meeting who received the highest vote of candidates failing of election. He shall be installed at the next Church Board meeting.

**In the absence of a candidate from the last First Chinese Church of Christ election, the Church Board may appoint a church member to fill such vacancy for the duration of the current calendar year. (May 5, 2002)**

E. Officers.

1. The Chairman/Moderator. The Chairman/Moderator shall preside at all congregation meetings and at all Church Board meetings. He shall have the power to call special meetings; oversee the administration of the Church and be an ex-officio voting member of all committees of the Church Board.
2. The Vice Chairman. The Vice Chairman shall assist the Chairman in the performance of his duties. In the event that the Chairman is unable to perform his duties, the Vice Chairman shall act in his stead.

In the event that both the Chairman and the Vice be absent from a meeting of either the Church Board or the Congregation, the

Treasurer or another member of the Church Board shall be designated to act in their places.

3. The Secretary. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a record of all meetings of the Congregation and the Church Board. He shall also conduct correspondence of the Church and supervise the elections of the Church.
4. The Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be Chairman of the Finance Committee. Under the direction of the Church Board it shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer to: present a Church budget; to receive and disburse church funds; to make regular statements of the financial condition of the Church; and to supervise the financial affairs of the Church.

The Treasurer and the Secretary may appoint, from among the members of the Board, assistants in the performance of their duties and responsibilities.

#### **ARTIICLE V. THE PASTORAL STAFF.**

- A. Selection and Appointment of the Pastor. The Church Board shall recommend to the Congregation the appointment of a pastor. The Congregation upon receipt of the Church Board's recommendation may upon a two-thirds vote call a pastor.

Denomination Affiliation. The pastor shall be a member of the United Church of Christ or be a member of a church which is a communion with that denomination.

Installation. Upon acceptance of the call of the Congregation and after completion of arrangements with the Oahu Association of the United Church of Christ, the pastor shall be installed at an appropriate ceremony.

Term of Office. The term of office for the pastor shall be for three years. His term of office may be extended by the Congregation for additional periods of time.

Termination. The above mentioned call may be terminated by either the pastor or the Congregation upon sixty days written notice of intention of terminate the contract.

Duties of the Pastor. It shall be the duty of the pastor to preach the Gospel, call people to repentance, administer the holy sacraments, visit members and non-members of the Church, and minister to the spiritual needs of members and other individuals associated with this Church. He

shall minister equally to the needs of the rich and poor, the lowly and the famous. He shall lead the church with his personal example as well as by his comforting word. He shall with the help of the Holy Spirit endeavor to serve this Church and its people with all of his energies. He shall make such reports to the Church Board and to the Congregation as shall be required by either entity.

- B. Selection and Appointment of Other Members of the Pastoral Staff. The Church Board may as the need require establish other positions on the pastoral staff. After establishment of these positions, the Church Board shall recommend to the Congregation the call of individuals to these positions. Upon receipt of the Church Board's recommendation, the Congregation by a two-third vote may call individuals to serve on its pastoral staff.

All members of the pastoral staff shall be members of the United Church of Christ or be a member of a church in communion with that denomination.

The other members of the pastoral staff shall under the direction of the Pastor assist him in the performance of his pastoral and other responsibilities.

- C. Ordination. Any member of this church or its pastoral staff, who has felt the call of God to devote his entire life to the service of Christ and has been duly trained in theological education may be recommended to the Church Board for ordination. After the Church Board has heard his statement of beliefs and considered his personal qualifications, both being favorable, the Church Board may then petition the Oahu Association of the United Church of Christ, to call an ecclesiastical council to examine his faith and qualification.

## **ARTICLE VI. FINANCES**

The Church shall seek support by contributions of individuals and organizations. Opportunities shall be offered to all members of the Church and the congregation to make regular pledges and contributions to the Church. The designation of money for current expenses, benevolences and specific projects shall be under plans approved by vote of the Church. Auxiliary organizations are invited to contribute under plans of their own choosing.

## **ARTICLE VIII. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

All organizations connected with the Church and using its premises and equipment shall be integral parts of the Church and under its supervision.

## **ARTICLE IX. ADVICE AND DISCIPLINE**

- A. Members. If a member of this church has become unfaithful in conduct to the requirements of the Christian faith, he shall be given reproof by the pastor. If he refuses to repent and make amends for his behavior, the pastor and Church officers shall go to advise him. If he continues in his refusal to repent and make amends for his behavior, then the members of the Church Board shall meet to recommend disciplinary action to the Congregation. The Congregation in a meeting described above shall take appropriate action.
- B. Board Members. All members of the Church Board shall attend meetings regularly. In case one is unable to attend, he shall notify the Secretary of the Church Board of his absence.

## **ARTICLE X. RULES OF ORDER**

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall be the parliamentary authority for all matter of procedure not specifically covered by the Constitution and By-laws.

## **ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS**

The By-laws may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Church at any regular or special meeting, providing that a notice specifying the time of the meeting and the substance of the proposed amendment shall have been given two weeks immediately preceding said meeting, and copies of the amendments have been made available for viewing by Church members.

## **ARTICLE XII. TRANSITION**

Upon adoption of these by-laws, the Church Board shall make appropriate changes in its organization to reflect the above provisions.