

Eastern Hills Chinese Church of Buffalo Constitution

Article 1. Full name of the Church and the articles described within its constitution

- 1.1 The name of the church shall be known as Eastern Hills Chinese Church of Buffalo.
- 1.2 The name of the church shall be: 水牛城东岭華人教會
- 1.3 Eastern Hills Chinese Church of Buffalo will be henceforth referred to as “the Church” in this constitution.
- 1.4 The constitution includes the following articles

Article 1: Full name of the Church and the articles described within its constitution

Article 2: The purpose of the Church

Article 3: The basic faith of the Church

Article 4: The relationship between the Church and EHW, and its nature of cooperation.

Article 5: Communion

Article 6: Church member qualifications

Article 7: The Management of the Church

Article 8: Deacons' Council

Article 9: General Assembly

Article 10: Church finance

Article 11: Amendments

Article 12: Discipline

Article 13: Dissolution of the church

Article 14: Pastoral responsibilities and term extension

Article 2: The purpose of the Church

2.1 To disseminate the gospel from Jesus Christ for Chinese and others who live within the vicinity of the Buffalo's great metropolitan area

2.2 To establish the body of Christ and establishing a church that befits his holiness and glorifies God.

2.3 To provide the life of the church including worship, teaching, fellowship, and ministry for Chinese and other Christians living in the Buffalo metropolitan area.

Article 3: The Basic Faith of the Church

3.1 The Church firmly believes that the Bible, consisting of 66 books in the old and new testaments, is inspired by God. It is the perfect truth. It is infallible, and is the ultimate basis and authority for doctrine and deed. It is the complete revelation of God's plan for salvation.

3.2 The Church firmly believes that there is only one God, the true God of Holy the Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

3.3 The Church firmly believes that God created the universe, and He is the master of the universe. He is a God of pure, righteous, holiness, and compassion.

3.4 The Church firmly believes that Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son since the beginning, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. He was crucified and died on the cross to atone for

the sins of man. He resurrected on the third day, ascended into heaven and is the high priest and mediator between God and man.

3.5 The Church firmly believes that Holy Spirit of truth, who leads people to repentance, to be born again, and to sanctification

3.6 The Church firmly believes that all people have sinned, are separated from God, and have no way to be saved by themselves. Christ is the only Savior, and he who believes in Him will be saved. Sins are forgiven through the redemption of Christ's precious blood. And we are justified through His resurrection.

3.7 The Church firmly believes that the Church is composed of people who are chosen by God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Church is the body of Christ, the house of God and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Church should be sanctified as the pillar of the truth, the illuminating lamp-stand and the glorious testimony of Jesus Christ. All believers should participate in the work and service of the Church.

Article 4: The relationship between the Church and EHWC, and its nature of cooperation.

4.1 Eastern Hills Chinese Church Of Buffalo is a cooperative ministry functioning with the support of and under the auspices of Eastern Hills Church to reach Chinese and other Asian background people in WNY with the Gospel of Jesus Christ

4.2 Under the auspices of Eastern Hills Church, the Eastern Hills Chinese Church Of Buffalo is independently operated and non-denomination organization.

4.3 Under the auspices of Eastern Hills Church, the Eastern Hills Chinese Church Of Buffalo will carry out election of its Deacons' Council members in accordance to this constitution.

4.3 The Eastern Hills Chinese Church Of Buffalo and other church or gospel organizations maintain a unified heart as provided by the holy spirit. Under the principle of this constitution, will carry out...

Article 5: Communion

5.1 As stated in the Bible, it is the commandment and the teaching of Jesus Christ and the apostles that Baptism and the Lord's Supper should be observed by the whole church as a testimony to God and man, and in the remembrance and honor of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5.2 Gospel friends who voluntarily accepts Jesus Christ as the Savior and repents must register for baptismal class at the church. After inspection by the pastoral staff and confirm the correct faith, the gospel friends can then be baptized.

5.3 All baptized believers can participate in the communion regardless of nationality, race, region, and denomination.

5.4 The communion is carried out once a month and presided by the Pastor.

Article 6: Church member qualifications

6.1 Anyone who resides in the Buffalo metropolitan area can apply for the membership of the church:

6.1.1 The individual must have repent, a believer in the Christ, and reborn as a Christian.

6.1.2 The individual must have been baptized and provides proof of baptism

6.1.3 The individual must agree to the purpose and basic faith as stated in this constitution.

6.1.4 The individual must attend Sunday worship for at least six months before applying for the church membership.

6.2 Anyone who is baptized by this church will automatically become its member.

6.3 Anyone who applies for the membership must obtain an application form from the Chairman of the Deacons' Council fill the form out, and returned to the Deacons' Council. The application will be reviewed by at least two members of the Deacons' Council with the applicant subjected to interview by the Deacons' Council members. After deliberation by the Deacons' Council, a recommendation will be generated by the Deacons' Council and the formal membership of the applicant will be announced as the new member of the church at a formal church gathering (e.g. Sunday worship).

6.4 The rights of a member:

6.4.1 For a member to have voting rights or to be eligible to be voted into any position within the Church, the member must be a frequent attendant of Sunday worship (at least more than 6 months within a calendar year, unless there are special circumstances that dictates his/her prolonged absence) and must be over 18 years of age.

6.4.2 Is able to provide written inquiry/suggestion to the council or members meeting to consider.

6.4.3 Is able to request Special members meeting provided that he/she prepares, in advance, a written agenda and such agenda also contains signatures from at least 50% of the active members to approve such agenda being discussed.

6.5 The responsibilities of a member:

6.5.1 To seek a life that uses the teaching of the Bible as its compass and standard.

6.5.2 Pray for brothers and sisters of the church, and those of Chinese heritage in this world. Express care and love for each other.

6.5.3 Support the church via the following activities: A) Consistent and frequent attendance of Sunday worship, Prayer meetings, Bible studies, and other fellowships; B) Active participants of church life and other retreats; C) provide financial support to the mission of this church and its need.

6.5.4 Attend this church's general assembly, and with the heart of a prayer, to support all aspects of the church's work by voting.

6.5.5 No member may represent the church without the explicit authorization from the Deacons' council.

6.6 Cancellation of a membership:

6.6.1 A member may provide a written request to the Deacon's Council to cancel his/her membership of the church.

6.6.2 Any member whose conduct is in violation of the teachings by the Bible, and who does not heed the advice of the Deacon's council, may have his/her membership permanently revoked or temporarily suspended.

6.6.3 Any member who is absent from the church's Sunday worship for 6 consecutive months will automatically has his/her membership cancelled.

Article 7: The Management of the Church

7.1 Under the auspices of Eastern Hills church, the General Assembly is the highest decision-making meeting.

7.2 The Deacons' Council is the main operating department of the church. The Deacons' Council reports to the General Assembly.

7.3 The Deacons' Council may delegate small teams to help with tasks within the church. These teams will report directly to the Deacons' Council.

7.4 Any decision made by the Deacons' Council must have a voting quorum which is 2/3 of the council members.

7.5 The Deacons' Council should use all its power to reach unanimous decisions on each resolution. In the case where unanimous decision cannot be reached, the resolution must be passed by at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the attending council members.

7.6 Any decision reached by the Deacons' Council can be vetoed by the General Assembly, which would require $\frac{3}{4}$ of the members attending in order to achieve such veto.

Article 8: Deacons' Council

8.1 The Deacons' Council and its members include:

- 8.1.1. The Chairperson
- 8.1.2 The Finance Committee
- 8.1.3 The Education Committee
- 8.1.4 The Worship Committee
- 8.1.5 The Ministry Committee
- 8.1.6 The Caring Committee
- 8.1.7 The General Affairs Committee
- 8.1.8 The number of members comprising the Deacons' Council is 7-15% of the total church member.

8.1.9 The chairman of the Deacons' Council is elected by the Council and the election process is supervised by the pastor or the previous chairman.

8.1.10 The pastor is automatically a member of the Deacons' Council.

8.2 The responsibility of Deacons' Council

8.2.1 Members of the Deacons' Council will be elected each year during General Assembly.

8.2.2 Deacons' Council Member Nomination Committee

8.2.2.1 The Deacons' Council will propose the number of candidates required in accordance to Article 8.1.8 of this by-law.

8.2.2.2 The Deacons' Council will select Deacons' Council Member Nomination Committee

8.2.2.3 Deacons' Council Member Nomination Committee will consist of Deacons' Council members and non-members. The number of Deacons' Council member can not be more than non-members. The number of Deacons' Council Member Nomination Committee members cannot be less than 4.

8.2.2.4 Any member can nominate, in writing, another member to be considered as a candidate for Deacons' Council Member Nomination Committee member. The number of people nominated by each member must adhere to the number as described in Article 8.2.2.1

8.2.2.5 The Deacons' Council Member Nomination Committee accepts nomination from members, each nominee will be ranked according to the number of nominations received. This process will be carried out in accordance to Article 8.4 and will first communicate such nomination to the nominee and its spouse for approval. A final list of candidates will be generated in accordance to Article 8.2.2.1 of this by-law.

8.2.3 The list of candidates should be distributed to all members for their consideration at least 28 days in advance of the General Assembly.

8.2.4 The members shall select by secret ballot, during the General Assembly, the new members of the Deacons' Council. Voting will be carried out in accordance to Article 9.4.1.

8.2.5 The Deacons' Council Membership term is two years and new members may be elected each year during the General Assembly. The current Deacons' Council member may seek election for one additional term of two years. Any member who served two consecutive terms (4 years total) can only be eligible for this membership 1 year past the 4 years served.

8.2.6 The Deacons' Council must elect at least one new member each year. To prevent the situation where no new members are elected or all members have been replaced, any Council member may volunteer to ask to be replaced 1 year in advance, or re-elect for a term of 3 years. Alternatively, the member can also postpone to serve after 1 year, at which time he/she may seek to serve only for a one-year term (instead of a two-year term).

8.3. The responsibilities of the Deacons' Council:

8.3.1 Take care the church members' spiritual guidance and supervise the work of the church in accordance to God's will and intent.

8.3.2 Maintain the church's vision and mission.

8.3.3 Render decision on church affairs and strategic planning for long term growth of the church.

8.3.4 Promote the spread of gospel, teaching of the Bible, and further learning of the believers through various activities.

8.3.5 Administer church operation and finances.

8.3.6 Prepare an annual budget of the church and report year-end financial report to the General Assembly.

8.3.7 Handling of church assets.

8.3.8 Maintaining contact with other churches whose vision and goals align with that of our church.

8.4 The qualification of Deacons' Council Member:

8.4.1 For a member to be eligible as a Deacons' Council Member, the member must be a frequent attendant of Sunday worship and has already served in some capacity (e.g. usher, presider, etc) (at least more than months a calendar year, unless there are special circumstances that dictates his/her prolonged absence) and must be over 21 years of age.

8.4.2 A clear understanding of the Bible and comply with teachings as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Acts 6:3, and Romans 12:1

8.4.3 Has been baptized for at least two years.

Article 9: General Assembly

9.1 General Assembly and Ad hoc Assembly

9.1.1 The General Assembly meets once a year. The date will be decided by the Deacons' Council. At the General Assembly, a summary report on church activities and finances, as well as budget requests for the coming fiscal year, election of new Deacons' Council members, will be decided.

9.1.2 Ad hoc assembly may be requested at the discretion of the General Council that requires an urgent manner to be resolved. The process to go about in setting up an Ad hoc assembly will be done in accordance to Article 6.4.3

9.2 The Deacons' Council must inform the church members, at least 28 days in advance, the date of the General Assembly. This must be done in writing, and will include the agenda. For ad hoc assembly, it must be announced to members at least 7 days in advance in writing.

9.3 The procedure of the assembly:

9.3.1 The presiding chairman is the Chairman of the Deacons' Council

9.3.2 Any proposed resolution for must be distributed, in writing, at least 14 days prior to the assembly, and must inform all members of the church at least 7 days in advance.

9.3.3 The quorum for the assembly is at least 50% of the active church members.

9.4 The procedure for passing resolution during the assembly:

9.4.1 Any important resolutions such as amendments of the by-laws, hiring/extension of contract of pastor, voting/resigning of Deacons' Council members, church infrastructure and finance administration, and others, must be passed by at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the assembly members.

9.4.2 Any other resolution must be passed by at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the assembly members.

Article 10: Church finance

10.1 The major source of church's finance comes from the offerings of the church members.

10.2 The annual budget is to be crafted by the Finance Committee of the Deacons' Council and presented to the church members at the General Assembly.

10.3 Any important expenditure must be approved by the Deacons' Council.

10.4 Two auditors are elected from the current Deacon's Council and their role is to audit the church expenditure and present their report at the General Assembly.

Article 11: Amendments

11.1 Any resolution to amend any part of this by-law must be carried out in accordance to Article 9.4.1.

11.2 Any other motions not covered by this by-law should be dealt with in accordance to biblical principles.

Article 12: Church Discipline

12.1 Any church member who misbehaves or violates the church discipline is subject to teaching by the pastoral staff. However, repeat violations or any serious transgressions may subject to have its membership revoked at the discretion of the Deacons' Council.

12.2 For pastoral staff – any pastoral staff whose action is inconsistent with the biblical principles or violates church disciplines or spreads false teaching may be subject to inquiry by the Deacons' Council based on feedbacks from church members. Following potential investigations, any allegations found to be true will provide ground for dismissal and termination of contract between the pastoral staff and the church in accordance to Article 14.5.

Article 13: Dissolution of the church

13.1 Any resolution calling for the dissolution of the church requires a special general assembly and during which $\frac{3}{4}$ of those in attendance must voted in favor of such dissolution. The Deacons' Council must inform all members at least 28 days in advance of such assembly.

13.2 After dissolution of the church, any outstanding debt will be paid off with existing asset and any leftover asset will be donated to a religious organization with a similar vision as the church.

Article 14: Pastoral responsibilities and term extension

14.1 The qualification of the pastor must fulfill those described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and 1 Peter 5:1-5; a clear testimony of God, a pure faith, a clear understanding and dissemination of biblical principle to church members, a testimony of living a holy life, and in possession of a mature spiritual wisdom who acts as a role model for church members.

14.2 Responsibility

14.2.1 Shepherding the church, delivering sermon, clarifying the biblical teachings, praying, training of the believers, caring for the spiritual life of church members, and spreading the gospel to non-believers.

14.2.2 Working together with the Deacons' Council to plan the future directions of the church, and responsible for the messages conveyed by Sunday sermons, training of church members and training of leadership skills among church members.

14.2.3 Other responsibilities such as baptism, communion, weddings and funerals.

14.2.4 Pastoral benefits such as health insurance, retirement, salary, and vacation will be specified in accordance to the contract and implemented by the Deacons' Council accordingly.

14.3 Pastoral hiring

14.3.1 A Pastoral Search Committee will be nominated by the Deacons' Council and this committee will consist of members and non-members (but are church members) from Deacons' Council.

14.3.2 The Pastoral Search Committee will seek qualified candidate in accordance to Article 14.1. Once a rightful candidate is identified, the Committee will recommend such candidate to the Deacons' Council and a vote will be casted to decide the suitability of the candidate. After which such candidate will be made known to the general church members.

14.3.3 An Ad Hoc Assembly will be requested in accordance to Article 9.4.1. and the decision on hiring the pastoral candidate will be voted on by members.

14.3.4 After hiring of the pastor, the pastor and his/her spouse will automatically become the member of the church. The pastor and his/her spouse will excuse themselves from discussion about his/her pastoral contract renewal/non-renewal due to the conflict of interest involved.

14.4 Pastoral contract renewal.

14.4.1 The term of a pastoral contract is 3 years. After 3 years, the Deacons' Council will decide whether to renew the contract.

14.4.2 If the Deacons' Council decides to renew the contract and this is agreed upon by the Pastor, the contract can be renewed for an additional 3 years. This process can repeat until one side decides against renewal of the contract.

14.4.3 If the Deacons' Council elected against renewing the pastoral contract, or that a resolution proposed (and passed by at least ½ of the church members as evidenced by their signatures) to decide for/against renewal of the pastoral contract, then the Deacons' Council must request an Ad Hoc Assembly and allow the members to decide on such important manner as per Article 9.5.1

14.5 Pastoral Contract Termination.

14.5.1 Any pastor will be terminated from his/her service should either of the following occurs:

A The teaching is no longer in accordance to the Bible

B The teachings shames the name of God

14.5.2 If either of the above is alleged, a signed petition by two or more members of the church may be submitted to the Deacons' Council for further investigation. If the allegations were proven to be true, the Deacons' Council will request an Ad Hoc Assembly and share its findings with the church members. Any resolution will then be passed in accordance to Article 9.5.1.