

Arlington Chinese Bible Church

Church Constitution

2426 Superior Drive, Arlington, Texas 76013 Tel: (817) 461-8427

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
ARLINGTON CHINESE BIBLE CHURCH

This document is divided into ten articles.

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ARTICLE ONE: NAME

The church is named the Arlington Chinese Bible Church.

ARTICLE TWO: REGISTRATION

1. On September 6, 1987, Arlington Chinese Bible Church was registered as a religious non-profit organization under the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act.
2. The chairman, secretary and treasurer of the Board of Directors handle all legal affairs and documents on behalf of the church.

ARTICLE THREE: MISSION STATEMENT

In accordance with the Great Commission entrusted to us by the Lord Jesus Christ, the church will equip the saints to carry out the duties to build up the body of Christ, to spread the gospel, and to lead people toward a living faith in Jesus Christ, and reconciliation with the only true God. (Matthew 28:19-20)

ARTICLE FOUR: CHURCH GOVERNMENT

1. Spiritual leadership:
The church acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as the head, the indwelling Holy Spirit as the source of energizing power, and the Holy Scriptures as the infallible guide in matters of faith, church order and discipline.
2. Denomination:
Arlington Chinese Bible Church is a member of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not affiliated with any denomination, but will cooperate with other churches of the common evangelical faith in activities towards a common purpose. Any decision approved by the legally defined number of votes during the official church membership meeting is final. The Board of

Directors, the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons are charged with decision making authorities in spiritual matters and daily administrative duties.

3. Governing authority:

Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the church commits the authority of governing and administration to its membership.

ARTICLE FIVE: CHURCH DOCTRINE

- I. We believe literally in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as inspired of God, inerrant in the original writings, and of supreme and final authority in faith and life. (II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:21)
- II. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19, II Corinthians 13:14) (FATHER—Ephesians 4:6; SON—Hebrews 1:8; HOLY SPIRIT—John 14:16-17)
- III. We believe Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, undiminished deity and true humanity united in one person. (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:20-21, Luke 1:35-36, Hebrews 10:12, Philippians 2:5-8, John 14:8-12. I Timothy 2:5-6)
- IV. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as our substitutionary sacrifice according to the Scriptures, and all who receive Him by faith are justified on the basis of His shed blood. (I Corinthians 15:3-4, Colossians 1:14, Ephesians 1:4-9, Romans 5:8-10, II Corinthians 5:21, I Timothy 1:15, Romans 3:21-26)
- V. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, His bodily ascension into heaven, and His present ministry as High Priest and Advocate for us. (Hebrews 9:24, Hebrews 10:21, I Timothy 2:5-6, I John 2:1, I Corinthians 15:1-4, Hebrews 7:25, Acts 1:9-11)
- VI. We believe the Holy Spirit existed eternally with the Father and the Son; His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. During this present age He convicts men (John 16:8); regenerates the believing sinner (Titus 3:5); baptizes believers into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13), and indwells (I Corinthians 6:19), seals (Ephesians 4:30), and fills (Ephesians 5:18) believers. He guides (Romans 8:14) instructs (John 16:12-15), and empowers the believer for godly living and service.
- VII. We believe angels were all originally created holy; but under the leadership of Satan, some angels now exist in a fallen state. (Jude 1:6)
- VIII. We believe that Adam was the first man created by God. His sin brought not only physical death but also spiritual death (which is separation from God) unto the entire human race. Consequently, all human beings are dead in sins and trespasses and born with the sinful nature. (Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12, Genesis 1:26-27, Psalms 51:5)
- IX. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost; the saved unto everlasting blessedness, and the lost unto everlasting conscious punishment in the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:12-15, Acts 24:14-15, John 5:28-29, Revelation 21:8, Luke 16:19-31)
- X. We believe that believers in Christ are sanctified unto God for His service after regeneration:
 - A. At the moment of salvation (I Corinthians 6:11, I Corinthians 1:2, Hebrews 10:10, Hebrews 10:14)
 - B. Daily by the reading of the Word and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. (Psalms 119:11, Ephesians 5:25-26, John 17:17, Galatians 5:16, Romans 8:4)
 - C. Ultimately when the believer comes into the actual presence of the Lord. (I Corinthians 15:51-58, I John 3:2, I Peter 1:4-6, Jude 24-25)

- XI. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, which is His Body, the Church. (Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 4:1-16, Colossians 1:15-18, Romans 12:4-5, I Corinthians 12:12-17)
- XII. We believe in the imminent and personal return of Christ to rapture His church (I Thessalonians 1:8-10, I Thessalonians 4:14-18, I Thessalonians 5:9), and the premillennial return of Christ to the earth with His church to redeem Israel. (II Thessalonians 2:1-3)

ARTICLE SIX: ORDINANCES

- 1. Water baptism:
Our church performs water baptism for believers according to the teachings of the Scriptures. Water baptism is a believer's public testimony before God and man, and therefore a necessary ritual. It identifies believers with our Lord in His death, burial and resurrection. Candidates for baptism must have experienced new birth, and water baptism is only performed after verification by pastor and Board of Directors.
- 2. Communion:

Our church will have communion at least once a month, and all true believers who have been baptized, regardless of denomination, can receive communion with a godly attitude to remember Jesus Christ according to His commandment.

ARTICLE SEVEN: PERSONNEL

- 1. Pastoral Staff
 - a. Senior Pastor:
 - i. Qualifications:
 - 1. Must meet the qualifications specified in 1 Timothy 3:10-13, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-3. Must agree to the doctrines of the church, and follow the constitution of the church.
 - 2. Must have a sense of mission, direction, long-term vision and leadership ability.
 - 3. Must be ordained and have more than 5 years of pastoral experience.
 - 4. Must have a degree from a university and seminary.
 - 5.
 - ii. Responsibilities
 - 1. Be devoted to prayer and preaching and nurturing the church. Be an example for believers.
 - 2. Be in charge of church worship service, preaching from the pulpit, and performing ordinances.
 - 3. Teach pastoral staff, conduct planning with elders and deacons to further the ministries of the church.
 - 4. An automatic member of Board of Elders and Deacons.
 - 5. Represent the church to the outside.
 - 6. Exhort all pastoral staff.
 - iii. Recruiting Process:

1. Candidates must be recommended by current pastoral staff, elders, or deacons to the pastoral search committee.
 2. The Board of Elders can nominate 5 people to sit on the pastoral search committee, 3 of whom must be members of the Board of Elders. The candidate has to be approved by at least two-thirds of the votes during the membership meeting, and after that the Board of Elders may make a written offer.
- iv. Terms of service and extension:
1. The first term is three years, and after that each term is five years. The candidate must give a written response within thirty days of receiving the offer.
 2. Six months before the term expires, the church should decide whether to extend the offer for another term.
 3. The extension must be approved by two thirds of the votes by people other than the Board of Deacons and the candidate. The candidate pastor can be notified in writing within 14 days of the vote.
- v. Leaving the term:
1. Resignation: If for whatever reason the person cannot continue discharge the duties, written notice of resignation must be given to the Board of Deacons three month in advance before it becomes official.
 2. If the term is not extended, then the pastor is automatically discharged. The pastor can be discharged through resignation.
 3. Termination: If the pastor does not perform his duties toward the church based on section 1B of the constitution, the Board of Deacons can terminate his position (including all administrative authorities) by at least two thirds of the votes, and notify the pastor by two representatives. If the pastor agrees, then he has to submit written designation within one week, and leave the post within 3 months. If the pastor refuses to resign, then the matter can be made public to the entire congregation, and can terminate his position by voting in the church membership meeting.
- vi. Vacancy:
- If the position of the senior pastor remains vacant, the Board of Deacons can determine the appropriate way to perform its duties, and the duration can be determined by the Board of Deacons.
- b. Pastor and assistant pastor:
- i. The pastor or assistant pastor assists the senior pastor in the church. If the senior pastor cannot perform his duties, then the pastor, and the assistant pastor, in that order, can step in on his behalf.
 - ii. The qualifications, recruiting process, termination and resignation for pastor and assistant pastor are the same as the senior pastor.
- c. Preacher:
- i. The duty is to assist the church in all spiritual ministries, preaching the Word of God, and equipping the saints.

- ii. Must have ministry experience, and approved by pastoral search committee, the Board of Deacons and the Senior Pastor.
 - d. Evangelist:
 - i. A member of the church with ministry experience, and a clear understanding of the calling of God, with a good testimony and willingness to be used by the Lord. Obedient to the leading to the Holy Spirit in preaching the gospel.
 - ii. With referral, and after discussion with and approval by the senior pastor, If the Board of Directors approve, the church can provide appropriate financial support.
 - e. Secretary or director:
 - i. Assist the senior pastor and the chairman of the Board of Directors in secretarial duties and other church affairs.
 - ii. Must be a Christian with a clear understanding of the new birth, a member of the church with the right qualifications.
 - iii. The offer may be extended after discussion with the senior pastor, and approval by the Board of Directors.
- 2. Church Officers:
 - a. Elder
 - i. Qualifications:
 1. Must possess the qualifications specified in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-3.
 2. Obedient to the teachings of the Bible, and faithful in financial giving.
 3. Gifted in teaching and caring.
 4. Must be a deacon for at least one term (two years) in the church.
 - ii. Responsibilities:
 1. Assist the pastor in providing general direction of the church and long term planning.
 2. Assist the pastor in teaching and caring.
 3. Watch over the church.
 4. Must attend meetings of the Board of Elders.
 - iii. Size and term:

No size limit, and term is permanent. If for reasons like physical weakness, voluntary rest, psychological or mental incapacity, the Board of Directors can approve by two-thirds of the vote to allow the elder to rest, and no longer participate in the work of elder.
 - iv. Election:

Nominated by pastor, current elder, or deacon. Needs to be unanimously approved by the Board of Directors, and takes effect only after two thirds of the votes. After the election, ordination can be performed according to the teachings of the Scriptures.
 - v. Leaving the term:
 1. If for whatever reason the elder cannot continue discharge the duties, he can leave the term after approval by the Board of Elders. The Board of Directors then has the responsibility to notify the congregation.

2. If the behavior of the elder violates the qualifications specified in item A, then his position can be terminated after the Board of Elders notifies the congregation.
- b. Deacon
- i. Qualifications:
 1. Must possess the qualifications specified in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
 2. Obedient to the teachings of the Bible, and faithful in financial giving.
 3. Be a baptized believer for at least three years, and be a member of the church for at least one year.
 - ii. Responsibilities:
 1. Performs the duties that are given by the church.
 2. Attend monthly deacon meeting.
 3. Assist the pastor in caring, visiting and teaching.
 4. Be an example to believers.
 - iii. Term:

Term lasts two years, and can continue for an additional term if re-elected. After the second term, the person can be nominated again only after one year after the end of his last term.
 - iv. Election:
 1. Form a nominating committee, which includes three members of the Board of directors, and two members of the church.
 2. The committee conducts some preliminary investigation, and then submits to the Board of Directors for approval.
 3. The pastor or elder talks to the candidate in person to confirm his/her willingness. If no problems found, then the Board of Directors can submit the list of candidates to the membership meeting. It takes effect only after approval by two-thirds of the votes.
 - v. Number of deacons:

Based on the needs of the church, the number of deacons cannot exceed 12 people.
 - vi. Leaving the term:
 1. If the deacon for whatever reason cannot discharge the duties, he/she can leave the term after approval by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has the responsibility to notify the congregation.
 2. If the deacon's behavior violates the qualifications specified in item 1, then the Board of Directors can notify the congregation and terminate the position.

ARTICLE EIGHT: MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership qualifications:
 - a. Through baptism

If one applied for and received water baptism in the church automatically becomes a member of the church.
 - b. Through application

- i. Anyone who believes and has accepted Jesus Christ as savior, has experienced the new birth and received water baptism can apply for church membership.
 - ii. May apply only after at least regular attendance of church worship service for at least three months.
- c. Membership procedures
 - i. The applicant must fill out an application form.
 - ii. The applicant must agree with the church constitution, and is familiar with various fellowship and activities, and understand the responsibilities that a member has. If the applicant joined the church through water baptism, then he/she must attend the water baptism class prior to receiving water baptism.
 - iii. The applicant must speak in person with the pastor or a member of the Board of Directors to confirm the testimony of salvation and agreement with the church constitution, and then after that can be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval .
 - iv. When the applicant has received water baptism, or his/her application has been approved by the Board of Elders, then the church may hold a brief ceremony during the church service and welcome him/her to become a member of the church.
 - v. Serving in the church

To serve in the church, one needs to be a member of the church.

2. Membership rights and responsibilities

- a. Membership rights
 - i. Can attend membership meeting
 - ii. Can participate in voting, election and right to be elected.
 - iii. Can receive spiritual assistance and prayer support from the church for him or herself and his/her relatives.
 - iv. The church will make the best effort in assisting in marriage, funerals and other affairs.
 - v. May use the church facilities according to the rules of the church.
- b. Membership responsibilities
 - i. Attend various gatherings of the church on a regular basis.
 - ii. Give financially to the church on a regular basis to support the ministry of the church according to the teachings of the Bible.
 - iii. Actively participate in the various ministries in the church.
 - iv. Read the bible and pray regularly, bear good testimony towards other believers.
 - v. Care for other membership, love and encourage good works, and prosper the gospel.
 - vi. Be familiar and obey the constitution of the church.
- c. Membership termination
 - i. Membership is terminated due to the following situations:
 - 1. Death.

2. The church will terminate the membership if the member stops attending worship services of the church for more than a year, and will not give recommendation letters for membership transfer.
3. If a member requests membership transfer to another church, the church will terminate his/her membership. In the meantime, members who is applying to transfer membership may ask the church to write a recommendation letter to complete the transfer process. If due to lack of clarity on the identity of the receiving organization, then the church will not send out the recommendation letter for membership transfer.
- d. Discipline: If the member exhibits the following behavior:
 - i. Doctrinal errors, heresy, or apostasy (Galatians 1:8-9).
 - ii. Violation of laws of society and customs, or not obeying the rules (1 Corinthians 5:11, Colossians 3:5-9)
 - iii. Disturbing the unity and peace of the church.
The pastor and elders of the church will exhort repeatedly based on the principles in Matthew 18:15-17. If the member does not repent, the Board of Elders will notify the congregation and terminate his/her membership. If there is clear signs of repentance after the fact, the Board of Elders can notify the congregation and re-accept him/her as a member, based on principles in 2 Corinthians 2:6-8.

ARTICLE NINE: CHURCH AFFAIRS

1. Board of Directors
 - a. Organization: consists of pastors, Board of Elders and deacons. The chair of the Board of Elders will be the chair, and will hold meeting at least once a year.
 - b. Responsibilities:
 - i. Responsible for coordinating between Board of Elders and Board of Deacons.
 - ii. Execute the ministry specified in the constitution.
 - c. Voting: A legally designated member of the Board of Directors has the right to vote, and every agenda needs votes of two-thirds or more in order for it to pass. If the member has a conflict of interest with the agenda discussed, he needs to recuse himself.
2. Board of Elders
 - a. Organization: Pastors and elders make up the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders has chair and secretary, and they are selected by other elders. Their responsibilities are specified by the Board of Elders.
 - b. Responsibilities:
 - i. Shepherd, teach and care for the church, and enforce discipline.
 - ii. Plan and execute long term vision and goal.
 - iii. Responsible for explaining and guarding the church constitution.
 - iv. Process membership application.
 - v. Train and find elders, deacons and coworkers.
 - c. Meetings:
 - i. The chair and pastor needs to attend the monthly meeting of the Board of Deacons.

- ii. There are no regular meetings for the Board of Elders. The frequency of the meeting is decided based on the needs of the church, but needs to have at least one meeting per quarter.
 - iii. Any legally designated member of the Board of Elders have the right to vote.
- 3. Board of Deacons:
 - a. Organization:

The pastor, the chair of Board of Elders, and deacons make up the Board of Deacons. The Board of Elders has chair, secretary and treasurer, and are selected by other current deacons.
 - b. Responsibilities:

General responsibilities:

 - i. Assisting pastor in developing the overall ministry of the church.
 - ii. Have regular board meetings and discuss the various administrative duties of each department.
 - iii. Divide into departments based on administrative organization, and distribute the responsibilities among coworkers.
 - c. Officer responsibilities:
 - i. Chair: Responsible for overseeing the development of the administrative ministries of the church, and coordinate the affairs of the various departments. Preside over the meetings of the Board of Deacons include deciding meeting agendas. If the chair cannot attend the meeting for whatever reason, then he needs to ask another deacon to assume the chair's duties.
 - ii. Secretary: Responsible for all meeting minutes, and votes from membership meetings, and all outbound correspondence. Maintain records of the Board of Deacons, and manage memberships.
 - iii. Treasurer: Manage and audit the properties and financial records of the church, administer and plan the annual church budget.
 - d. Voting: every legally designated member has the right to vote.
- 4. Membership Meeting
 - a. Annual meeting: should be held once a year in November. If elders are being elected, then the Board of Directors is responsible for the meeting.
 - b. Special meeting: If half or more of the Board of directors, or more than 1/3 of the church members request a meeting, then the Board of directors meeting should be held within 30 days. The same agenda needs to wait six months until the next membership meeting.
 - c. Preparation:
 - i. Two weeks before the meeting, the agenda and the date of meeting needs to be made public to the church members.
 - ii. If necessary, a consultation meeting can held to discuss the agenda in order to facilitate decision making.
 - d. Voter qualification: a member, 18 years or older, who attends church worship services regularly in the previous six months.
 - e. Quorum: A minimum of half the voting members needs to attend the meeting in order for it to be legal. If the quorum is not met, then the meeting needs to be postponed. If

the quorum is not met for the second time regarding the same agenda, then the meeting can be held for the third time regardless of the quorum.

- f. Number of votes: Unless specified in special instructions, an agenda can only be approved by more than one half of the votes.
 - g. Voting method: our church uses named ballots.
 - h. The Board of Deacons needs to verify the church memberships once every October.
5. Asset Management Committee:
- a. Member qualification:
 - i. A deacon who has served at the church for at least one term (two years).
 - ii. Must not be an employed coworker or his/her relative.
 - b. Organization: three people make up this committee. They are nominated by the Board of Elders. If the Board of Elders approves unanimously, then they can only take office after two-thirds of the church approves by voting. They can select chair, secretary and treasurer.
 - c. Term: three years, can be re-elected. If the member cannot execute the duties or leave the post earlier for whatever reason, then the Board of Elders can assist in finding the replacement. The procedure is the same as specified before.
 - d. Responsibilities:
 - i. Manage assets and related matters on behalf of the church.
 - ii. Take care of all the assets of the church.
 - iii. Submit a report to the Board of Directors regarding all the assets of the church, their values, insurance and insured amount.
 - iv. Manage the purchase, sale, mortgage, lease and transfer of church real property after approval by the Board of Elders and the membership meeting.
 - v. Asset disposal:
The purpose of church assets are used for the purpose of Christian ministry, and to fulfill the spiritual needs of the believers. If the church is shut down, then its assets can be transferred to other Christian or charitable organizations based on (C)(3) of Section 501 of the tax law passed in 1954.

ARTICLE TEN: ADDENDUM

1. Use of church facility

If specified in the church constitution, then follow the constitution. If undefined, then following these rules:

- i. Marriage:
 - 1. Both parties in the marriage must be born again Christians (2 Corinthians 6:14).
 - 2. All procedures in the wedding ceremony must not violate biblical truth and local laws.
 - 3. Both parties in the marriage must have discussion with the senior pastor and accepted by the Board of Directors at least one month in advance, and pray with sincerity and make full preparations.
- ii. Celebrations:
 - 1. Any member who likes to hold celebrations and need the use of the church facility needs to be approved by the senior pastor and the Board of Directors.

2. The participants shall rejoice together and praise the grace of God without pomp and with gratitude.
3. Non-members who desire to use the church facility need to follow “church facility use regulations”.
4. “Church facility use regulations” needs to be made by the Board of Directors.
- iii. Funerals:
 1. If a church member wants to hold a funeral for his/her relative, he/she needs to receive approval first from the senior pastor and the Board of Directors. Based on the teachings of the Bible, no idols or similar items are allowed. It should be regarded as an opportunity for the preaching of the gospel and for the comforting of the people.
- iv. Borrowing:
 1. If a doctrinally pure church or organization needs to temporarily borrow the facility in order to preach the gospel and for the gathering of the believers, then it can be borrowed after approval by the senior pastor and the Board of Directors if it does not interfere with the worship service of the church.
 2. The facility cannot be borrowed for purposes that have nothing to do with the gospel ministry.
2. Ordinance and commissioning

The church can ordain pastors, elders, preachers and commission missionaries for the needs of the gospel based on teachings found in Timothy 3:1-10 and 5:22, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

- a. Pastor:
 - i. The Board of Directors can actively seek out preachers who have served in the church for more than a year, and ordain as pastor after receiving approval from the preacher. This needs to be approved by the membership meeting.
 - ii. The candidate for ordination must possess the character and gifting appropriate for pastoring a church.
 - iii. Members of the ordination committee and ordination date can be decided by the candidate and then submit to the Board of Directors for approval.
- b. Preacher and evangelist:

The ministry experience, faith, love and testimony needs to be verified by the senior pastor to ensure the adherence to the doctrines of the church. After acceptance by the senior pastor, then it can be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. After that, the senior pastor can hold the ordination or commissioning ceremony.
3. Other
 - a. The benefits of pastoral staff can be decided and executed every year by the Board of Directors.
 - b. To ensure the spiritual health of a director, or the balance between ministry and work, if that person cannot attend the Board of Directors or Deacons meeting, then he/she must appoint another coworker in his/her place, to submit reports and provide recommendations. The substitute cannot participate in the decision making process.
 - c. Infant dedication ceremony:

If parents are willing to bring their infants before the Lord, the senior pastor can give prayers of thanksgiving according to the teachings of the Bible.

4. Revising the constitution
 - a. If an elder, deacon or more than ten church members petitioned in written form to revise the constitution, then it can be submitted to the Board of Elders for discussion.
 - b. The draft for the revision of the Constitution needs to be approved by two-thirds of the Board of Directors, and can only take effect after at least two-thirds approve in the church membership meeting.
 - c. Principles for revision:
The name, act, organization, mission statement, doctrines, and sacraments of the church cannot violate the original intention of the constitution. If there is a contradiction, then the original constitution applies.
5. The literal interpretation of the constitution of the church is based on the Chinese version.