

Constitution of the Austral-Asian Chinese Church

Definitions

Except where there is denotation to the contrary, otherwise the following abbreviations or names shall be interpreted as:

"Church"	Denotes the Austral-Asian Chinese Church
"City"	Denotes the City of Adelaide
"former church"	Denotes the previous church one belongs to before becoming a member of this Church
"Public Officer"	Denotes the representative responsible for contact between this Church and the government

Interpretations

Except where there is denotation to the contrary, otherwise the following abbreviations or names shall be interpreted as:

- a. The use of singular and plural nouns shall be mutually inclusive;
- b. The use of the male and female genders shall be mutually inclusive.

1. Name

- 1.1. This Church shall be called the “Austral-Asian Chinese Church”

2. Mission Statement

- 2.1. This Church shall take upon itself to exalt Christ, to preach the Gospel, to promote the truths of Christ, to nurture the spirituality of believers, to carry out the works of the Gospel, and fulfil the entrustment of Christ as its mission.

3. Statement of Faith

- 3.1. This Church affirms belief in the Apostles’ Creed:

“We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.”

- 3.2. This Church affirms belief in the truths of the Holy Bible:

- 3.2.1. believing in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to be the Trinity God;

3.2.2. believing man is created in the image of God, and he lost his soul by defying God; by committing sin since the beginning of time, man has become sinner, cowering under the rage of God, that only with a sincere heart for repentance that salvation can come, and relying on the precious blood of Jesus Christ for absolution of the sinful nature, gaining rebirth by the Holy Spirit, and only thus can he enter into the Kingdom of God;

3.2.3. believing in the New Testament and the Old Testament to be God’s revelations, and the word of God, being the absolute and credible truth. These are the ways for vitalising life, and are the supreme principles of faith and conduct;

3.2.4. believing the devil is an evil spirit operating in the heart of every man of insolence, it is the source of all sins, and that the time will come for it to be sent to eternal punishment;

3.2.5. believing in baptism by water, to openly acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Saviour, testifying to die with Christ, to be buried with Christ and to rise again with Christ.

4. Members**4.1. Membership**

4.1.1. Those receiving baptism in this Church may apply to become members of this Church.

4.1.2. Those whose memberships belong to churches overseas or in other cities of Australia may apply to become members of this Church.

4.1.3. Those whose memberships belong to other churches in this City may apply to transfer to become members of this Church.

4.2. Membership Prerequisites

4.2.1. Members must be born-again Christians, baptised, aged 16 or above, and agree with the Mission Statement and the Statement of Faith of this Church.

4.2.2. Those applying or transferring to become members of this Church must have continuous attendance in this Church for a period of over six months.

4.3. **Application to Join or Transfer**

4.3.1. Those receiving baptism in this Church must complete a membership application form.

4.3.2. Those whose memberships belong to churches overseas or in other cities of Australia, who wish to apply to become members, must complete a membership application form attached with a baptism certificate. After being interviewed by the Pastoral Team, the application shall then be submitted to the Board of Deacons for approval; when approval is granted the names of the applicants shall then be posted on the weekly bulletin, and a day will be chosen to award the applicants with membership certificates at a Sunday Service, where they will officially become members.

4.3.3. Those whose memberships belonging to other churches in this City. who wish to apply to become members, must complete a membership application form attached with a baptism certificate and proof of cancellation of membership from their former church. After being interviewed by the Pastoral Team, the application shall then be submitted to the Board of Deacons for approval; when approval is granted the names of the applicants shall then be posted on the weekly bulletin, and a day will be chosen to award the applicants with membership certificates at a Sunday Service, where they will officially become members.

4.3.4. Pastors or Evangelists employed by the Church as well as their spouses shall automatically become members of this Church without having to apply to become members.

4.4. **Members' Rights**

4.4.1. Members who have reached the aged of 18 are entitled to take part in election and voting at General Meetings.

4.4.2. Members are entitled to be nominated as Deacons, subject to the requirements in Article 5.2.3.1 of this Constitution.

4.5. **Members' Obligations**

4.5.1. The obligations for members of this Church include continuous Church attendance, tithing, seeking spiritual development, taking part in ministries, endeavouring to preserve the unity of the Church, living sanctified lives; and seeking to fulfil the Great Commission entrusted upon by Jesus Christ.

4.5.2. Abide by the rules set out in this Constitution.

4.6. **Termination of Membership**

4.6.1. Membership shall be automatically terminated upon the death of a member.

4.6.2. Members who have been in continuous absence from this Church, without valid reason, for six months or longer, may have their memberships terminated.

4.6.3. Members of this Church whose words or deeds seriously damage the unity of the church or their moral conducts are contrary to the truths of the Holy Bible, and despite repeated warnings by the pastoral staff, remain unrepentant, may have their memberships terminated by a decision from the Board of Deacons.

4.6.4. Members of this Church who move to other cities or countries and are subsequently unable to attend this Church, may have their memberships terminated.

4.6.5. Members of this Church who become members at another church may have their memberships terminated.

5. Church Organisation

5.1. General Meetings

5.1.1. Annual General Meeting

5.1.1.1. An Annual General Meeting must be convened within three months after the end of the financial year.

5.1.2. Extraordinary General Meeting

5.1.2.1. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be convened in the following circumstances:

- a. Upon the request of the Board of Deacons; or
- b. Upon receipt of a written request to the Board of Deacons by at least 30% of the members of this Church.

5.1.3. Organisation

5.1.3.1. All members and non-members of this Church may attend General Meetings; however, only members aged 18 or over are entitled to take part in elections and voting during General Meetings.

5.1.3.2. General Meetings shall be chaired by the Chairman of the Board of Deacons. In the case of the Chairman of the Board of Deacons being unable to perform this duty, he must nominate another Deacon ahead of time to chair the General Meeting.

5.1.3.3. The Secretary of the Board of Deacons shall keep minutes at the General Meeting. In case the Secretary is unable to perform this duty, the Chairman of the Meeting may nominate another suitable member to perform the duty of the secretary.

5.1.4. Authorities and Responsibilities

5.1.4.1. To approve the financial report of the Church for the previous year.

5.1.4.2. To approve the minutes of any General and Extraordinary General Meeting.

5.1.4.3. To make decisions on the renting of property; or the purchase, sale, transfer or renovation of properties owned by the Church. Where the rent of a property does not exceed the limit set out in Article 8.3.1 of this Constitution, the Board of Deacons is entitled to independently make a decision to rent the property without seeking authorisation from a General Meeting.

5.1.4.4. To carry out duties and responsibilities required of the General Meeting as set out in this Constitution.

5.1.5. Notice for Meeting

5.1.5.1. The Board of Deacons must announce the date of the Annual General Meeting at least 8 Sundays before the meeting is convened.

5.1.5.2. An announcement for the date of an Extraordinary General Meeting must be made at least 14 days before the meeting is convened. Under urgent circumstances, the chairperson of the meeting may waive this particular requirement.

5.1.6. Quorum

5.1.6.1. The quorum for a General Meeting is 30% of the total number of members in this Church.

5.1.6.2. In cases where a General Meeting fails to reach the quorum, the meeting cannot proceed, and the Board of Deacons must arrange for an alternative date for the Meeting to be convened.

5.1.6.3. If a quorum is still not met at the resumed General Meeting, then the attendance at the time of the meeting shall constitute a quorum for that General Meeting.

5.1.7. **Motion**

5.1.7.1. Meeting motions shall normally be proposed by the Board of Deacons.

5.1.7.2. A member of this Church may move a motion in writing no less than 28 days in advance of the Annual General Meeting. The motion proposed must be seconded by 30% of the members present at the Annual General Meeting before it can be deliberated.

5.1.7.3. The Board of Deacons must announce any motion at least 14 days before an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting is convened.

5.1.7.4. No member may move any motion during a General Meeting.

5.1.7.5. No motion shall be moved by a member in an Extraordinary General Meeting called by the Board of Deacons.

5.1.7.6. In accordance with Article 5.1.2.1b of this Constitution, when a member of this Church intends to call an Extraordinary General Meeting, a motion must be proposed and seconded in writing by 30% of members, and thereafter reviewed by the Board of Deacons, a date for the meeting and the motion for the Meeting shall be announced.

5.1.8. **Resolution**

5.1.8.1. All motions must be put to a vote by the members attending the Meeting by means of a ballot or by a show of hands.

5.1.8.2. Except otherwise specified in this Constitution, motions are normally decided by a simple majority of the members attending a General Meeting.

5.1.8.3. All motions must be personally voted by the attending members of a General Meeting; no proxies are accepted.

5.2. **Board of Deacons**

5.2.1. **Organisation**

5.2.1.1. The Board of Deacons consists of elected deacons and one representative from the Pastoral Team, the number of members is dependent upon the prevailing conditions and needs of the church.

5.2.1.2. The Senior Pastor is the ex-officio representative of the Pastoral Team in the Board of Deacons, with right of speech and right to vote but without having to assume a portfolio of ministry. In the absence of a Senior Pastor, the Pastoral Team must appoint from among the pastors a representative to the Board of Deacons, who enjoys the same rights as the Senior Pastor in the Board of Deacons.

5.2.1.3. Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer are mandatory positions.

5.2.2. **Authorities and Responsibilities**

5.2.2.1. Carry out tasks required of by the Board of Deacons under this Constitution.

5.2.2.2. Work with the Pastoral Team to promote the work of the Church.

- 5.2.2.3. Develop plans and financial budgets for ministries.
- 5.2.2.4. Supervise and manage the operation and development of subordinate organisations.
- 5.2.2.5. Manage the Church's finances and its assets.
- 5.2.2.6. Maintain and interpret this Constitution.
- 5.2.2.7. Develop by-laws to meet the operational needs of the Church.
- 5.2.2.8. Appoint representatives to participate in the affairs of AACC Union Inc.
- 5.2.2.9. Appoint functional group members and project group members (for example, appointment of members for the Pastor Recruitment Team and the Constitution Committee).

5.2.3. Election of Deacons

5.2.3.1. Qualifications

- 5.2.3.1.1. Deacons must possess the qualities described in 1 Timothy 3: 1-13 of the Holy Bible.
- 5.2.3.1.2. Must be a member of this Church for over three years.
- 5.2.3.1.3. If married, the spouse must also be Christian.
- 5.2.3.1.4. Direct relatives including mother, father, brothers, sisters, children, and spouse must not be elected as Deacons at the same time.
- 5.2.3.1.5. Must reach the age of 25 on the date of being elected.

5.2.3.2. Term in Office

- 5.2.3.2.1. A deacon serves for a term of three years, and may be re-elected for one term; thereafter one must take leave for at least one term before being re-elected again as deacon.

5.2.3.3. Chairman of the Board of Deacons

- 5.2.3.3.1. The chairman of the Board of Deacons shall be elected from among the deacons of the current term.

5.2.3.4. Nomination of Candidates

- 5.2.3.4.1. The candidate for a position in the Board of Deacons must be nominated by a pastoral staff or a current serving member of the Board of Deacons. After consent is granted by the Board of Deacons, the Pastoral Team is to inquire with the nominee as to their willingness for appointment and obtain their consent before he or she can officially become a candidate.
- 5.2.3.4.2. The list of candidates for a new term of office as Deacons must be published five weeks before election. Individuals who want to raise objections may submit their reasons in writing using their real names to the Board of Deacons within 10 days from the date the list of candidates is published. The final list of names of candidates shall be published two weeks before election.

5.2.3.5. Election Arrangements

- 5.2.3.5.1. The required number of Deacons shall be elected from among the candidates for the Board of Deacons via secret ballot in a General Meeting, with the candidates receiving the highest number of votes winning the ballot.

5.2.3.5.2. The number of votes received by the candidates for the Board of Deacons must exceed one third of the number attending the General Meeting on the day of voting. The number of votes received by each candidate must be published on the day of voting.

5.2.3.5.3. In cases where the number of elected Deacons fails to reach the required number, then an alternative date would have to be set to elect from the list of unsuccessful candidates to make up the shortfall. The re-election may be held in accordance to Articles 5.2.3.5.1 and 5.2.3.5.2 of this Constitution.

5.2.3.6. Re-election Arrangement

5.2.3.6.1. Should there be a vacancy in the Board of Deacons arising from a deacon leaving office, the Board of Deacons may act in accordance with the prevailing conditions, either re-elect a new deacon or appoint existing deacon(s) to backfill that vacancy until the end of the term. If re-election is to take place, it shall be in accordance with the provisions in clauses 5.2.3.5.1 and 5.2.3.5.2 of this constitution.

5.2.4. Resignation and Dismissal of Deacons

5.2.4.1. In cases where a Deacon is unable to perform his duties due to personal or health reasons, he is to submit a letter of resignation 30 days before leaving office. Once authorisation is granted by the Pastoral Team and the Board of Deacons, he may be removed from duties as Deacon.

5.2.4.2. If a Deacon is suspected of being in breach of the truth and teachings of the Holy Bible, committing acts that dishonour God's name; or wilfully damaging the unity of the Church, preaching doctrines that are in contrary to the truths of the Holy Bible, the Pastoral Team shall proactively conduct investigations into the matter; during the period the investigations are undertaken the Deacon in question may, depending on circumstances, be temporarily suspended from office and ministries. Should the investigation prove the facts of the case, the Pastoral Team shall propose a dismissal motion to the Board of Deacons. Upon approval by the Board of Deacons, an Extraordinary General Meeting should then be convened to propose a dismissal motion. After the motion is passed by an Extraordinary General Meeting, the individual concerned can then be dismissed from his position as Deacon.

5.2.5. Meeting

5.2.5.1. The Board of Deacons shall hold a meeting at least once every two months.

5.2.5.2. At least half of the serving Deacons must be present before the meeting of the Board of Deacons can be held. In the case of insufficient quorum, an alternative date would have to be set to re-convene the meeting. In the postponed meeting only the presence of one third of the serving Deacons would be required before the meeting can be held.

5.2.6. Resolution

5.2.6.1. Any proposed motion in the Board of Deacons shall be carried by more than half of the members present before it can be deemed valid and effective.

6. The Pastoral Team

6.1. Organisation

6.1.1. The Pastoral Team includes all pastoral staff employed by the Church.

6.2. Authorities and Responsibilities

6.2.1. The Pastoral Team acts as the spiritual guide for the Church, its main duties and responsibilities include leading the flock, teaching and preaching the word of God.

6.2.2. The Pastoral Team shall seek directions and visions for the Church along with the Board of Deacons.

6.2.3. The Pastoral Team must assume the responsibility of overseeing the operation of the Board of Deacons. Should the Board of Deacons act in deviation from the teachings of the Holy Bible, the Pastoral Team must offer counsel and seeks correction.

6.2.4. Duties and Responsibilities of the Senior Pastor

6.2.4.1. Performs the duties and responsibilities as described in Article 6.2 of this Constitution.

6.2.4.2. To represent the Pastoral Team in the expression of consensus or opinions and to participate in the decision making process of the Board of Deacons.

6.2.4.3. Administers the ministries of other pastoral staff.

6.2.4.4. Leads the Church and promotes the growth of the Church.

6.2.4.5. Works alongside other pastoral staff in the planning of ministries.

6.2.5. Duties and Responsibilities of Pastors/Evangelists

6.2.5.1. Assists the Senior Pastor of this Church to perform his duties as described in Article 6.2 of this Constitution.

6.3. Qualifications of Pastoral Staff

6.3.1. Qualifications of Senior Pastor/Pastor

6.3.1.1. The Senior Pastor/Pastor must be a born-again Christian, whose characters must conform to the requirements described in 1 Timothy 3: 1-7, have pure faith, believes in the Holy Bible as the word of God, holds a degree from a seminary recognised by this Church, must have more than five years of fulltime religious service experience in a church, and agree to abide by this Constitution.

6.3.2. Qualifications of Evangelist

6.3.2.1. An Evangelist must be a born-again Christian, whose characters must conform to the requirements described in 1 Timothy 3: 1-7, have pure faith, believes in the Holy Bible as the word of God, holds a degree from a seminary recognised by this Church, and agree to abide by this Constitution.

6.4. Employment of Pastoral Staff

6.4.1. Employment of Senior Pastor

6.4.1.1. The Board of Deacons is to appoint a Pastor Recruitment Committee to be responsible for the employment of pastoral staff. The members of the Pastor Recruitment Committee may include pastoral staff, Deacons and representatives from members.

6.4.1.2. The Pastor Recruitment Committee shall identify and select suitable candidates in accordance with the requirements of the Board of Deacons, it shall then recommend suitable candidate for consideration by the Board of Deacons, after the Board of Deacons has granted its approval the name of the chosen candidate shall be submitted to the General Meeting for a decision whether to offer employment to the candidate.

6.4.2. Employment of Pastors and Evangelists

6.4.2.1. The Board of Deacons is to appoint a Pastor Recruitment Committee to be responsible for the employment of pastoral staff. The members of the Pastor Recruitment Committee may include pastoral staff, Deacons and representatives from members.

6.4.2.2. The Pastor Recruitment Committee shall identify and select suitable candidates in accordance with the requirements of the Board of Deacons, it shall then recommend suitable candidate for consideration by the Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons is entitled to independently make its decision to hire the selected candidate on a contract basis for a period of up to one year, and does not require the approval of a General Meeting.

6.4.2.3. Before the end of the first contract period, subject to satisfactory assessment by the Pastoral Team and the Board of Deacons, the renewal of employment contract is to be decided at a General Meeting.

6.5. Dismissal of Pastoral Staff

6.5.1. If a pastoral staff is suspected of being in breach of the truth and teachings of the Holy Bible, committing acts that dishonour God's name; or wilfully damaging the unity of the Church, preaching doctrines that are in contrary to the truths of the Holy Bible, other Pastoral Staff shall proactively conduct investigations into the matter (in case there are no other Pastoral Staff, the Board of Deacons may act as substitutes); during the period the investigations are undertaken, the staff in question, may, depending on circumstances, be temporarily suspended from office and ministries, however his remuneration and staff benefits shall remain unchanged before dismissal. Should the investigations prove the facts of the case, the Pastoral Team shall propose a dismissal motion to the Board of Deacons. Upon approval of the motion by the Board of Deacons, an Extraordinary General Meeting shall be called to offer explanations and to present their decision for dismissal. The contractual relationship between the pastoral staff concerned and the Church shall be terminated forthwith upon the issue of a letter of dismissal.

6.6. Ordination

6.6.1. After three years of continuous pastoral service in this Church, a motion for ordination may be proposed to the Board of Deacons by a Deacon or by another pastoral staff. Upon granting of authorisation by the Board of Deacons the motion is then submitted to the General Meeting for a vote. After the motion is passed, the Pastoral Team shall be invited to form an Ordination Committee to deal with the Ordination matters for the Missionary concerned.

7. Public Officer

7.1. The position of Public Officer shall be filled by the Treasurer of the Board of Deacons.

7.2. The Public Officer must notify the relevant government department within one month of his appointment.

7.3. The Public Officer must fulfil the responsibilities required of him as a Public Officer by the government.

8. Finance and Assets

8.1. Financial Reports

8.1.1. The financial reports of the Church must be published in the General Annual Meeting.

8.1.2. The financial reports of the Church must be filed with the relevant government department in accordance with statutory requirements.

8.2. Auditing

8.2.1. A registered auditor who is a non-member of this Church shall be appointed to audit the annual financial reports by a motion in an Annual General Meeting.

8.2.2. The audited annual financial reports must be approved at an Annual General Meeting.

8.3. **Property**

8.3.1. The Board of Deacons may rent suitable properties to meet the requirements for development of the Church, except that the rental payment may not exceed 15% of the general account revenues in the previous financial year.

8.3.2. Any motion for purchase, sale, transfer or renovation of properties owned by the Church may only be approved with 75% of the members in favour in a General Meeting.

9. **Common Seal**

9.1. The Board of Deacons shall be responsible for overseeing the use of the common seal of this Church, the scope of use of the common seal shall cover resolution documents of the Board of Deacons and all documents relating to this Church that are legally binding. For it to be valid and effective, each instance of use of the common seal must be accompanied with the signatures of two current serving Deacons.

10. **Winding Up**

10.1. This Church may be wound up in accordance with a decision at a General Meeting, with 75% of the members present at the meeting in favour of the motion.

10.2. In the event the Church is wound up for any reason whatsoever, the net assets wholly owned by the Church may not be distributed to the members of this Church, these must be decided by a General Meeting to be bequeathed to a local church or organisation with at least 20 years of founding history and which shares the same faith and mission as this Church, in order to enable the recipient organisation to continue using these assets for expanding the reach of the Kingdom of Heaven.

10.3. In the event the Church is wound up for any reason whatsoever, and the assets of the Church are insufficient to cover its liabilities, members of this Church shall equally bear the liabilities owed by this Church.

11. **Amendments to Constitution**

11.1. The Articles relating to the Statement of Faith in this Constitution may not be amended.

11.2. Any motion for amendment of this Constitution must be proposed by the Board of Deacons to the General Meeting.

11.3. Any motion for amendment of this Constitution must be approved by at least 75% of the members present at the General Meeting in favour of the motion.

12. **Powers**

12.1 The Church shall have all the powers conferred by section 25 of the South Australia Associations Incorporation Act 1985.