

**PARISH BY-LAWS**  
**CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
**THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA'S MISSION TO DELMARVA**

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**IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

**AMEN.**

Preamble

Christ the Savior Orthodox Church, located in the city of Berlin, Maryland, is a parish of the Archdiocese of Washington, a territorial unit of the Orthodox Church in America, which is the local autocephalous Orthodox Church, belonging to the world-wide federation of Orthodox Churches. The Primate of the Orthodox Church in America is the Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America and Canada.

The Parish is governed by the Tradition, that is, the whole body of teaching and practice of the One Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church. The Tradition is expressed, first of all, in Holy Scripture, and also in the Canons of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, the Canons of the Provincial Councils, the Canons and writings of the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church, in the liturgical life of the Church, and in the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America.

These By-laws consist of the eleven Articles that follow this Preamble.

**ARTICLE I Name**

The name of this parish is Christ the Savior Orthodox Church. Inc., and will be referred to in these By-laws as the Parish.

**ARTICLE II Purpose**

Section 1 The purpose for which the Parish exists is to maintain a local Orthodox Christian community under the authority and protection of the Ruling Bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington;

to worship God in accordance with the Tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church, "in spirit and in truth;" (John 4:24)

to preserve, protect, defend and propagate the Holy Orthodox Faith; The Apostle Jude exhorts us to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (v. 3) The Parish must be zealous in carrying out the Lord's commandment to make disciples of all peoples. (Matthew 28:19-20)

to provide charitable aid to the poor and Christian education for its members; "Give alms

of such things as you have." (Luke 11:41) "You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land." (Deuteronomy 15:11) "Increase in the knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:10)

And to build and maintain churches, chapels, schools and such other religious, educational and benevolent institutions as may be expedient.

Section 2 The languages of worship in the Parish shall be those that meet the needs of the membership, so that the people may understand. As St. Paul says: "how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? ... I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.." (I Corinthians 14:16-19)

Section 3 The Parish must strive to maintain an apostolic zeal and a missionary spirit to draw new souls to the Orthodox Faith, in accordance with its purposes as enumerated in Section I of this Article, thus carrying out the Lord's commandment to make disciples of all peoples. The Parish, likewise, must be ever ready to accept into its fellowship all persons who desire to follow the Orthodox way, that is, become members of the Orthodox Church and to live in accordance with her teachings. This the Parish must do, following the example of the Apostolic Church, which "added daily to the Church those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47)

In summary, the purpose of the Parish's existence is to worship God according to the Tradition of the Orthodox Church, to encourage unity with God among the members of the Parish, and to defend and promote the Orthodox Faith in the Delmarva area specifically and in America in general.

### **ARTICLE III Membership**

#### Section 1 Definition

Members of the Parish are those persons who:

- a) have been baptized and chrismated in the Orthodox Church and consciously uphold and profess the Orthodox Faith;
- b) are regular communicants, that is, participants in the Holy Mysteries of Confession and Communion. The term 'regular communicants' means those who partake of the Holy Mysteries frequently, ideally weekly, and no one can be a member of the Parish if he/she fails to comply with this obligation once a year;
- c) fulfill the stewardship obligations established by the Parish.
  - 1) Treasure: All members of the Parish are urged to make a yearly commitment for financial support to the Parish; the Old Testament ideal being a tithe of one's income and the New Testament example being the sacrificial offering of the widow's two mites.
  - 2) Time: All members of the Parish are urged to set aside the first portion of their time for worship, fellowship, charitable service, and education; recalling the Scriptural admonition to redeem the time (Ephesians 5:16), no longer

living the rest of our lives in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God (1 Peter 4:2).

- 3) Talent: All members of the Parish are urged to offer their talents in service to the Church; remembering that each member of the Body of Christ has been entrusted with gifts of the Holy Spirit for the ministry of the Gospel. (1 Corinthians 12)

d) and declare their intention to be members by fulfilling a written declaration.

## Section 2 Purposes of Membership - Privileges and Obligations of Members.

Following the Tradition of the Church, the purpose of membership in the Parish is to seek the knowledge of God and union with Him through Jesus Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and to express that unity with God in Christ in all religious, moral, family and social activities. Generally, this expression consists of an enlightened obedience to the teachings of the Orthodox Faith, and is manifested in regular attendance at the divine services of the Parish, in frequent reception of the Holy Gifts of the Body and Blood of Christ, in care for the Parish property and buildings, in regular contributions in fulfillment of the financial commitment, and in doing all that is possible to promote the Christian spirit of love, unity and brotherly concern among the members of the Parish.

## Section 3 New Members

Any person desiring to become a member of the Parish, and who is baptized and chrismated in the Orthodox Church, must present himself to the rector or priest-in-charge, who will inform him of the life and activities of the Parish. When that person shall have received the Holy Mysteries of Confession and Communion, he/she may then declare his/her intention to become a member of the Parish (The Parish should provide a form for a written declaration.), and will be received as such. The pastor and the parish secretary will enter his/her name in the list of members.

## **ARTICLE IV The Parish Meeting**

### Section 1 Authority

The Parish Meeting is the highest legislative, judicial and administrative authority of the Parish as a corporation. All members (as in Article III, Section 1) who have been members of the Parish for a period of six months and are at least eighteen years old may attend and vote at the Parish Meeting.

### Section 2 Place of the Parish Meeting

The Parish Meeting must be held on Parish premises.

### Section 3 Periodicity of the Parish Meeting

The Parish Meeting is held annually, on a determined Sunday of the year, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

### Section 4 Notice of the Parish Meeting

Notice of the annual Parish Meeting shall be given by the rector or priest-in-charge from the ambon at the Divine Liturgy on the three consecutive Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. Notice must also be made at least once in written form, in a special circular or in the parish bulletin, distributed to all voting members of the Parish (See Section 1, Article IV).

#### Section 5 Competence of the Parish Meeting

Matters pertaining to the life of the Parish that may be discussed and acted upon at the Parish Meeting include:

- a) the approval of the annual operating budget submitted by the Parish Council (Article X) or by a special budget committee;
- b) the election of the Parish Council members, the lay delegate to the Diocesan Assembly, and the lay delegate to the All-American Council, if the latter is to be convened in the current year.
- c) hearing and approving of annual or special reports by committees and parish organizations.
- d) decisions on matters concerning the purchase, improvement or sale of real property, investment of Parish funds (other than in savings accounts), and the use of Parish funds for loans for any purpose;
- e) proposal of resolutions to the Diocesan Assembly, these, if any, to be submitted to the bishop six months prior to the date of the Assembly.

#### Section 6 Special Parish Meetings

In addition to the annual Parish Meeting, Special Parish Meetings may be convoked by the bishop, the rector or priest-in-charge, or by the Parish Council, with the approval of the rector or priest-in-charge. Voting members of the Parish may petition the rector and the Parish Council to convoke a Special Parish Meeting, such petition requiring the signatures of two thirds of the total number of members.

Special Parish Meetings are called to discuss and act upon specific matters, and no other matter may be discussed at such meetings.

The matters to be discussed and acted upon are to be announced when notice of the Special Meeting is given. Regulations regarding the notice of a Special Parish Meeting are the same as those in Section 4 of this Article.

#### Section 7 The Quorum for the Annual Parish Meeting and the Special Parish Meetings

The quorum for the annual Parish Meeting shall be no less than 50% of the number of voting members of the Parish.

The quorum for a Special Parish Meeting shall be no less than 33% of the voting membership of the Parish.

In the absence of a quorum at the annual Parish Meeting or at a Special Parish Meeting, said meeting shall be adjourned and reconvened on the same day of the following week, and at this rescheduled meeting no less than 33% of the voting membership shall be necessary for a lawful meeting.

#### Section 8 Voting

A simple majority vote by those voting members in attendance at the Parish Meeting, Annual or Special, shall be decisive on all matters within the competence of the meeting.

#### Section 9 The Presiding Officer

The rector or the priest-in-charge is the presiding officer of the Parish Meeting, Annual or Special. The warden or another designee may also chair parts of the meeting sessions, in accordance with a prior agreement reached between him and the rector and the Parish Council.

#### Section 10 Confirmation of Minutes

A copy of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting or of a Special Parish Meeting, signed by the rector or priest-in-charge and the warden, shall be sent to the bishop, through the district dean of the diocesan chancellor, for confirmation. All decisions and resolutions in those minutes become effective upon receipt of such confirmation.

### **ARTICLE V The Rector or Priest-in-charge**

The rector or priest-in-charge of the Parish holds his office by virtue of his appointment by the diocesan bishop. The rector or priest-in-charge cannot leave the Parish without permission of the diocesan bishop.

All matters concerning his salary, his housing, and his benefits are to be agreed upon between the district dean of the diocesan chancellor and the priest and the Parish Council prior to his appointment.

By virtue of the Apostolic Succession abiding in the Church, which the priest shares through his ordination, it is his primary responsibility to preach, teach the doctrine of the Holy Orthodox Church, preside over the celebration of the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) and divine services in accordance with the Tradition of the Church, and to ensure that the life of the Parish as a whole is guided and directed toward spiritual and not secular ends:

Since the priest must answer to God for the lives and the salvation of those who are entrusted to his pastoral care (Hebrews 13:17), nothing in the Parish can be initiated without his approval and blessing, neither must he do anything pertaining to the life of the Parish without the knowledge of the Parish council and the parishioners, so that always there may be unity, mutual trust, cooperation and love. In the event of a disagreement between the priest and the parishioners or the Parish Council, the matter shall be referred to the district dean or the diocesan chancellor.

## **ARTICLE VI The Parish Council**

### Section 1 Composition

The Parish Council is composed of a minimum of (7) seven to (9) nine persons, according to the needs of the Parish, elected at the annual Parish Meeting.

### Section 2 Officers

At the first meeting of the Parish Council following the Parish Meeting at which they are elected, the members of the council elect the parish officers from among their number. The officers are: senior warden, junior warden, treasurer, and secretary. Only one member of a household may serve as an officer on the Parish Council during a given year.

### Section 3 Term of Office

The term of office for members of the Parish Council is (3) three years. A possible extension to (4) four years is permitted if the member is elected as an officer during their third year. After a member has completed their term on the Parish Council, one must remain off the Parish Council for a period of at least (1) one year.

The offices of senior warden and treasurer shall be filled in the even number years. The offices of junior warden and secretary shall be filled in the odd number years.

### Section 4 Eligibility

A voting member of the Parish who has been a member for one year is eligible for election to the Parish Council. A voting member of the Parish who has been a member for two years is eligible for election as an officer of the Parish Council.

In addition to the technical qualification of one-year membership in the Parish, the Parish Meeting must elect to the Parish Council only those members of the Parish who are zealous for the Orthodox Faith, who are regular communicants at the Eucharist, who are active in the Parish, who are willing to work for the improvement, both spiritual and temporal, of the Parish, who are not contentious and rebellious against the authority of the Church, and who are not motivated to seek office out of pride, but only out of a strong desire to work for the Lord and the building up of His Church. Specifically, no one who fulfills only the minimum requirement of receiving the sacraments, who is known to be rebellious against the Church, the Diocese, the bishop, the rector or the priest-in-charge, who promotes divisions and factions among the membership, and who is not regular in his/her attendance at the church's services, should ever be elected to a position of leadership in the Parish.

Wives of clergymen assigned or attached to the Parish, widows excepted, are not eligible for membership in the Parish Council.

### Section 5 Installation

Each year the newly elected members of the Parish Council must be duly installed in the church following the Divine Liturgy in the presence of the assembly of the faithful by the

rector or priest-in-charge. They must prepare themselves spiritually for their duties through the Holy Mysteries of Confession and Communion before their installation. The installation cannot be administered until their election has been confirmed by the diocesan bishop. The new council shall assume its duties immediately upon being installed.

#### Section 6 Competence of the Parish Council

See Article XI Section 7, of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America.

#### Section 7 Duties of Officers

Although local circumstances may require a redistributing of the duties of the officers of the Parish Council, in general, the scheme given below is to be followed:

a) The warden presides at meetings of the council in the absence of the rector or of the priest-in-charge or at any time by mutual agreement. He/She shall aid the priest in preparing the agenda for the council meetings. He/She is to be the ex-officio chairman of such committees as the priest and/or the council may appoint.

b) The secretary is to keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the council, to prepare and distribute copies of the minutes to the priest and the other members of the council within one (1) week following the meeting.

c) The treasurer is to maintain an accurate record of all monies received and disbursed, as well as pending accounts, to disburse monies as approved by the Parish Meeting and the Parish Council, to assist in the preparation of records for an annual or special audit, to assist in the preparation of annual financial contributions statements, to be in charge of filing proper tax forms and financial reports as required, to prepare financial reports to the Parish Council, and to prepare the annual financial report for presentation to the annual Parish Meeting.

#### Section 8 Removal from the Parish Council

a) All Parish Council members must continue to fulfill the qualifications for membership in the Parish Council during their entire tenure of office. Failure to retain membership as described in Article III, Section 1, will bring automatic dismissal from the council.

b) All Parish Council members are expected to attend all council meetings during their tenure of office. The absence of any council member for three (3) consecutive meetings will render him subject to dismissal.

c) Any council member who, during his/her tenure of office, engages in divisive or rebellious activities, who endeavors to create factions, or brings disharmony to or disturbs the peace of the Parish, is subject to dismissal.

d) Although the rector or the priest-in-charge initiates all dismissal procedures, the diocesan bishop, through the district dean or diocesan chancellor, may intervene in cases in which a council member becomes subject to dismissal for the causes stated in a, b, or c, of this section of Article VI.

## Section 9 Vacancies

- a) All vacancies which occur shall be filled by appointment of the rector or priest-in-charge with confirmation by the Parish Council.
- b) Such appointees shall hold their office until the next annual Parish Meeting.
- c) Persons appointed to fill vacancies must have all the qualifications of elected members of the Parish Council.

## Section 10 Parish Council Meetings

- a) The Parish Council shall establish a frequency of meetings with a minimum of 4 quarterly meetings per year. All meetings shall be held on Parish premises.
- b) The presiding officer of the council meeting is the rector or the priest-in-charge, but another member of the council, usually the warden, may chair sections of a given meeting.
- c) The quorum for discussing and acting upon matters within the competence of the Parish Council is a simple majority of the members.
- d) At its meetings, the Parish Council may consider only matters that are within the competence of the council.
- e) A majority vote of those members in attendance at a meeting of the Parish Council shall decide all issues brought before it.
- f) In the absence of the rector or the priest-in-charge, all decisions of the council must be submitted to him for confirmation before becoming effective.
- g) The minutes of the Parish Council meetings shall be signed by the rector or the priest-in-charge and the secretary (or warden). Original copies of the minutes are the property of the Parish and shall be filed by the rector or the priest-in-charge in the Parish archives.
- h) Parish Council meetings are open to all voting members of the Parish. Only members of the council may vote, but any voting member of the Parish may speak on an issue, if he/she is recognized by the chairman. At its discretion, the Parish Council may hold a closed meeting, that is, one restricted to council members.

## **ARTICLE VII Real and Liquid Property of the Parish**

### Section 1 Ownership

- a) The Parish corporation is the sole owner of all Parish property, assets and funds, and these are administered by the Parish Council in accordance with decisions made by the Parish Meeting and with the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America. Note: No decision of the Parish Meeting with regard to the property shall be contrary to or in conflict with the provisions of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America in this respect.



b) Disposition or disposal of Parish property shall be strictly in accordance with Article XII, Section 9, of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America,

## Section 2 Expenditures

All expenditures of the Parish shall be made by check or credit card, except those made through 'petty cash.' The Parish Council will oversee the usage of (a) church credit card(s), researching and implementing the appropriate policies and procedures for such usage. All expenditures made through petty cash must be accompanied by vouchers. Reimbursements to members of the Parish must be authorized in the operating budget or approved by the Parish Council. Reimbursement checks require two signatures who are not the recipient of the check.

## **ARTICLE VIII Official Signatures**

Section 1 All official documents for the Orthodox Church in America, the Diocese and the 'Metrical Records' of the Parish shall be signed by the rector or the priest-in-charge. In cases in which additional signatures are required, the warden, the secretary, or the treasurer may sign the document in question.

Section 2 All civil (legal) documents shall be signed by the rector or the priest-in-charge and such other officers as may be required by the voting membership of the Parish or by law.

Section 3 All expenditures made by check shall be signed by the rector or the priest-in-charge and either the warden or the treasurer. In case there is no assigned priest, the signatures of the warden and the treasurer are required.

Section 4 The Parish corporation seal shall be affixed to all documents requiring the same. Entrusted to the care of the rector or the priest-in-charge, the corporation seal is the property of the Parish. In the event of the transfer of the rector or the priest-in-charge, the seal is temporarily entrusted to the warden, who shall deliver it to the new priest, as soon as the latter is assigned and in residence.

## **ARTICLE IX The Auditing Committee**

Section 1 An auditing committee of two (2) voting members of the Parish but who are not officers of the Parish Council shall be appointed by the Parish Council.

Section 2 The auditing committee shall audit all the accounts of the Parish, inspect the vouchers for disbursements from petty cash and reimbursements, verify bank balances and securities, and generally investigate the financial administration of the Parish. They must audit the records at least one time a year and present a report of their findings to the annual Parish Meeting.

## **ARTICLE X The Budget Committee**

Section 1 Annually the Parish Council shall appoint a budget committee of at least two council members in addition to the rector or priest-in-charge, the warden, and the treasurer.

Section 2 The budget committee shall prepare an estimated budget for revision by the Parish Council before the approval and adoption of the voting members of the Parish at the annual Parish Meeting.

Section 3 The estimated budget shall be presented to the Parish Council at least thirty days before the annual Parish Meeting.

## **ARTICLE XI Amendments and Additional Regulations**

### Section 1 Amendments

These By-laws may be amended with approval of the Parish, gathering in special or annual meeting, and with the blessing of the diocesan bishop.

### Section 2 Additional Regulations

In matters not covered by these By-laws, the Parish Council may administer policies appropriate to the particular situation of the Parish. If warranted, such additional policies may be presented to the diocesan bishop for his approval before becoming effective.