

Constitution and Bylaws of *Redeemer International Congregation* of the Mekane Yesus Church

April 25, 2021

Article I Name

The name of this congregation shall be Redeemer International Congregation, hereafter referred to as “this congregation” or “the congregation”.

Article II Confession of Faith

1. This congregation believes and professes that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the holy Word of God and the only source and infallible norm of all church doctrine and practice.
2. This congregation adheres to the Apostle’s Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, which are formulated by the Fathers and accepted by the early church, and sees in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, which was worded by the Reformers, as well as in Luther’s Small Catechism a pure exposition of the Word of God.

Article III Purpose

The purpose of this congregation shall be to glorify God and expand His Kingdom by promoting and spreading the Gospel and making disciples of all nations.

To this end this congregation shall:

1. Provide Gospel-centered worship services where the Word is preached in the English language, and both members and guests are welcomed and built up in the faith.
2. Offer the benefits of the Sacraments, discipleship, pastoral care and Christian fellowship.
3. Minister to the needs of all who consider this congregation their spiritual home in Ethiopia.
4. Care for the needs of the community as God enables us.

Article IV Organization

1. This congregation shall be a self-governing body within the framework of the constitution of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY).
2. The congregation shall maintain membership in the EECMY through the Synod responsible for the area including the city of Addis Ababa.

Article V Authority

1. In all matters of Christian faith and life the Word of God is the highest authority.
2. The congregation’s governing authority rests in the local body and is exercised by the assembly of members in member meetings. The congregation delegates authority to a

Council in accordance with its designated responsibilities, as specified in this Constitution and in the Bylaws.

3. All schools, societies and other organizations that are established by this congregation, shall be under the authority of the Council.
4. The congregation may establish new congregations which will contribute to the fulfillment of its purpose as stated in Article III of this Constitution.
5. All land and buildings purchased by this congregation shall be the property of the EECMY and shall be registered in the name of the EECMY. Such property shall not be disposed of except by the EECMY (see EECMY constitution Art. XII).
6. This congregation through its Council, is entitled to manage its financial affairs independently, including opening and operating bank accounts and assigning signatories.
7. In all matters over which the synod or the EECMY has authority by its constitution, the congregation shall accept and obey the decisions of the synod and/or church.

Article VI Membership

1. The membership of this congregation shall consist of adults (at least 18 years of age) who have been baptized; have demonstrated their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to the satisfaction of the Council; affirm the Apostles' Creed; and are committed to the congregation's Purpose (Article III). Having fulfilled these qualifications, prospective members shall be received into membership by the Council.
2. In recognition of the particular needs of the foreign community, foreign nationals may be accorded membership in this congregation without jeopardy to their church membership in their home country.
3. All Members of this congregation shall be voting members, entitled and responsible to vote in congregational matters outlined in the Bylaws, Article II, and to hold any office in accordance with Article VIII of this Constitution.
4. It shall be the privilege and expectation of each member to participate in and contribute to the life and ministry of the church, in accordance with God's leading and provision of time, material resources, and spiritual gifts. Specific membership commitments are described in the Bylaws, Article II.

Article VII Congregational Meetings

1. The Annual General Meeting of the congregation shall be announced to the congregation at least two weeks in advance.

The agenda of the Annual General Meeting shall include the following:

- A. The Annual Report presented by the Council or the pastor/pastoral team and approved by the Council.
- B. The report of the Treasurer
- C. The approval of the new budget
- D. The election of members to the Council in accordance with Article VIII
- E. Other matters approved by the Council

2. Other congregational meetings shall be called by the Council and announced to the congregation at least one week in advance.
3. A quorum shall consist of $\frac{1}{4}$ of the members of this congregation. To transact ordinary business a majority vote of the quorum is necessary.

Article VIII Congregation Council

1. The leadership body of this congregation shall be a Council consisting of the pastor or a representative of the pastoral team and 8 members of this congregation, duly elected by this congregation. If the membership of the congregation is so small that this size is not practical, the council can decide to reduce the number of council members, but not to fewer than five members.
2. The Council shall oversee all administrative affairs of this congregation, shall counsel and assist the pastor/pastoral team in the spiritual guidance of the congregation and shall exercise discipline where required.
3. The Council shall elect officers of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary from within the Council.
4. The Council will appoint a Treasurer from the Members of the congregation, and invite him/her to Council meetings, as necessary.
5. The Council shall also serve as the Board of Trustees for all immovable property in accordance with the constitution of the EECMY, Article XII.
6. The Council is empowered to appoint all necessary committees for the work of the congregation.
7. The Council may appoint or employ members of an evangelical congregation in positions such as administration, music or others as deemed necessary for the smooth operation of congregations' ministry.
8. A quorum of the Council shall consist of half the number of elected Council members, but at least three.
9. Vacancies which occur in the membership of the Council, before the completion of their term, shall be filled by candidates from the membership identified by the Council to serve out the remainder of the term.
10. The term of office of the Council Members shall be two years, but shorter terms are possible if a Council Member becomes unavailable during the two-year period.
11. One half of the Council Members shall be elected on odd numbered years; the other half of the Council Members shall be elected on even numbered years.

Article IX Council Members and Officers

1. The council members of the congregation shall provide a Christian example to the other members of the congregation by regular participation in Sunday services, special services and events, by hearing and following God's Word, and by regularly partaking of the Lord's Supper.

2. The Chairperson of the Council shall preside at all meetings of the congregation and the Council. In his/her absence the Vice Chairperson of the Council shall chair the meeting. The Chairperson shall review the work of all members of the Council and ensure that their responsibilities are fulfilled before God and the congregation.
3. The Treasurer shall administer and oversee all of the financial affairs of the congregation in accordance with the directives of the congregation-and/or the Council.
4. Council members shall see to it that the Word of God is preached and upheld, that appropriate provision is made for the discipleship of the youth, and that all necessary discipline is exercised.

Article X Pastor(s) or the Pastoral Team

1. The congregation shall have the power to call a pastor or pastors. It shall do so in conformity with the requirements of the EECMY.
2. The pastor(s) shall be a member of an evangelical church in good standing with the EECMY.
3. The pastor(s) shall be a voting member of the Church Council.
4. The pastoral call shall be extended in accordance with the Bylaws of this Constitution, as determined by this congregation.
5. A temporary Pastoral Team may be appointed by the Council, in accordance with the Bylaws of this Constitution, when the congregation is without a pastor (either full-time or part-time).

Article XI Ecumenical Relations

The congregation shall be guided in all its relations with other Christian bodies by the synod and the EECMY in harmony with Article II of this constitution, with due consideration of the international nature of this congregation.

Article XII Amendments

Except for Article II and Article XII, this congregation may amend this constitution by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the congregation at two consecutive meetings. The meetings shall be at least four weeks apart. The Bylaws may be amended by $\frac{2}{3}$ vote at any meeting of the congregation.

BYLAWS

Article I The Pastoral Call

- 1: The plan to call a pastor (s), (either full-time or part-time) shall be discussed by the Council and presented and approved at the AGM or at a special congregational meeting. Any requirements held by the EECMY must be considered.
2. If the call is for a pastor to come from abroad,
 - a. The Council will request assistance (and approval as needed) from the EECMY to call a pastor from within the mission partner community.
 - b. If a pastor responds to the call, the Council will be responsible to interview and vet the applicant, in partnership with the EECMY and the mission organization.
3. If the call is for a pastor or pastoral candidate within the country,
 - a. The Council shall undertake the process of calling, interviewing and vetting the candidate.
4. Once a perspective pastor has been selected, the Council shall present the information at a congregational meeting. After the congregation, by a majority of at least $\frac{2}{3}$ votes cast, has confirmed the candidate, a written call, signed by the members of the Council and attested by the chairman of the meeting shall be sent to candidate, and the EECMY and the partner mission if applicable.
5. By this call the pastor(s) shall be held to teach, reprove, and comfort in accordance with the Confession of Faith (Article II of the Constitution) and the regulations of this congregation.
6. In the call the congregation shall bind itself, in accordance with the Word of God, to receive the pastor-elect as its pastor and spiritual advisor, to tender him/her Christian respect and obedience, to pray for him/her and provide the necessary support during his/her term.
7. At any time when the congregation is without a pastor (either full-time or part-time) the Council may appoint a Pastoral Team to pastor the congregation. The Pastoral Team members should:
 - Be members of this congregation
 - Be a mature Christian
 - Have taken formal theology classes
 - Fulfills the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3: 1-7
8. Should the congregation deem a change of pastor(s) advisable, the matter shall first be discussed with the Pastor at a meeting of the Church Council. If a peaceful settlement does not result, the congregation may by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of the voting members of the congregation dismiss the Pastor.

Article II Membership

1. All members shall endeavor to fulfill the following membership commitments:

We join together to love God, purposing to make time daily for Bible study, meditation, and prayer, and to seek the filling and refreshing of the Holy Spirit that we may know His will and live a victorious and holy Christian life through His power. We earnestly endeavor to

maintain a godly home life and to bring up those under our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We unite together in attending, with our family, the services of our congregation in order to be better equipped to serve Christ.

We unite in loving one another, ever striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and good works.

As far as it depends on us, we will live peaceably with everyone, and denying ungodliness and every worldly lust, we will seek by example and word to win the unsaved to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We join in supporting the ministries of our church and its worldwide mission thrust in every way possible, especially by fervent prayer and by faithful giving of our means as God has prospered us.

If leaving this place, we commit ourselves to unite as soon as possible with another church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

2. It is the privilege and duty of members to attend all member meetings and, with prayerful consideration, to participate in the following responsibilities:
 - A. Affirming Council members.
 - B. Approving the annual report and budget of the congregation.
 - C. Accepting, rejecting, or otherwise disposing of any matter submitted to the membership of the congregation.
 - D. Disciplining members for unrepentant sin according to Article III of the ByLaws; and
 - E. Amending the Constitution, except Articles II and XII, and the Bylaws of this congregation.
3. The Council may recognize the closure of a person's membership after he or she has moved out of the area or is otherwise not attending the services of the church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline by the Council according to the biblical principles outlined in the Bylaws, Article III.

Article III Congregation Discipline

1. All disciplinary proceedings in this church shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance with a view toward reconciliation and restoration. Should any grievance arise among congregation members, the aggrieved member shall follow in gracious spirit, the procedure commanded by our Lord in Matthew 18:15–20.
2. Should any report of gross misconduct or public scandal occur, the Council shall endeavor to resolve the matter. Should this effort fail, they shall report the case to the church membership (Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:11–15; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19–21).
3. The church membership shall prayerfully consider the Council's report and endeavor to reach a fair and just resolution of the matter. If an adverse decision is reached, the congregation membership may proceed to admonish or remove the offender from membership (1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:5–11).