

**ST. GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
CONSTITUTION**

PREAMBLE

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We, members of the Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, in the city of Phoenix, the State of Arizona, desiring the propagation of our faith and its teachings for ourselves and our posterity, do unite together as a Parish and Church for the receiving of the Holy Sacraments, for the observance of the faith, morals and discipline of our Holy Church as administered under the authority and jurisdiction of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, and do hereby adopt this Constitution, solemnly pledging ourselves to be governed by its Provisions and the Sacred Canons of the Holy Church.

**ARTICLE I
NAME**

- Section 1.** The name of this Parish shall be the St. George Antiochian Orthodox, both ecclesiastically and in civil law.
- Section 2.**
- A. Legal: This Church derives its legal authority to function as a Religious Corporation from a charter issued by the State of Arizona.
 - B. Ecclesiastical: This Church derives its ecclesiastic authority to function from the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

**ARTICLE II
PURPOSES**

- Section 1.** The purpose of this Church is to maintain and preserve the spiritual and physical well-being and unity of its membership in this community, coordinate religious work or activity with the intent of propagating, practicing and forever perpetuating religious worship services, ministrations, Sacraments, and teaching in Full accord and unity with the doctrines, rules, ritual, canon law, faith, practice, discipline, traditions and usages of the Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church as set forth in the preamble of this Constitution.
- Section 2.** In fulfilling the purpose set forth in Section 1 of this Article it shall ordain and establish rules and regulations, consistent with the Constitution of the Archdiocese and Sacred Canons of the Holy Church, according to which the members thereof, its clergy, elected officers, Parish Council,

Committees and organizations, shall act and officiate. It shall provide a place or places and facilitate the means for worship and religious education in accordance with this Constitution. It shall hold title to all properties, endowments, legacies, and all other gifts and contributions.

ARTICLE III **MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. The membership in the Church shall consist of two kinds: (1) Voting Membership and (2) General Membership

A. Voting Membership: The Voting membership shall consist of all Persons eighteen (18) years of age and over, regardless of sex, who have been baptized and accepted in the membership of the Holy Orthodox Church, according to its teachings, who accept, profess, and practice its faith and discipline, who contribute to the fiscal maintenance of this Church, through payment of dues, pledges, and assessments as are prescribed by the Parish by-laws.

B. General Membership (Non-Voting): The General Membership shall consist of all other persons who have been baptized and accepted in the membership of the Holy Orthodox Church according to its teachings who accept and practice the faith and discipline of said Church and profess membership in St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church but have not complied with all requirements of Voting Membership specified in Article III, Section 1.A.

ARTICLE IV **GOVERNMENT**

Section 1. The Constitution and Sacred Canons shall be the governing code for St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church.

Section 2. All Administrative Authority is vested in the Pastor and the Parish Council as hereinafter provided for.

Section 3. All legislative authority is vested in the general meeting of the Voting Membership of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church.

ARTICLE V **CLERGY**

Section 1. All clergy of this Church shall be appointed or removed by the Metropolitan Archbishop with the advice of the Parish Council.

Section 2. Pastor: The Metropolitan Archbishop shall appoint and designate the Pastor of this Church from the canonical clergy of the Archdiocese. He shall be the official representative of the Metropolitan Archbishop. In all matters involving canon law, spiritual function, priestly rights and duties, the Pastor and any other clergy shall be under the direct supervision of the Metropolitan Archbishop and not subject to any rules or regulations of the Parish.

Section 3. In order to dismiss or remove said clergy, pursuant to the initiative of the Parish Council, a formal petition shall be drawn by the Parish Council setting forth fully the reason for the desired dismissal. Said petition is to be sent to the Metropolitan Archbishop who is to act as sole judge of the merits of said petition for its acceptance or rejection.

- Section 4.**
- A. No member of the clergy has or shall claim any individual rights or ownership to the properties of St. George Antiochian Church, except as otherwise may be permitted by contract.
 - B. No member of the clergy or laity may enter into any contractual agreement, or otherwise engage in any business enterprise, which by its nature may jeopardize the assets of the Church, or subject such a parish to any claim, lawsuit, or other liability arising from such activity.

ARTICLE VI PARISH COUNCIL

Section 1. The Voting Members of the Parish Council shall consist of twelve Voting Members of the Parish, elected by the Voting Members of the Parish and by Pastoral appointment. Each elected or appointed term shall consist of three (3) successive years.

Section 2. Non-voting members of the Parish Council shall consist of the Pastor, the Director of Sunday School, a representative of the Choir, and presidents of Church organizations recognized by the Parish Council.

Section 3. No elected member of the Parish Council shall be eligible for re-election after the person has served two (2) successive three (3) year terms by election until the person has retired from the elected membership for a period of one (1) year.

Section 4. In the event of a vacancy in the Parish Council of an elected member, the Parish Council shall elect a person from the Voting Membership to complete the unexpired term within thirty (30) days from the declaration of the vacancy, in accordance with the procedures established in the By-

Laws. In the event of a vacancy of the appointed members of the Parish Council, the Pastor shall appoint a person from the Voting Membership to fill the unexpired term within thirty (30) days

Section 5. Nominations and Elections.

- A. At least one (1) month before the annual meeting of the Church, the President of the Parish Council shall appoint a Nominating Committee composed of the Pastor and at least four (4) members from the Voting Membership.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least 1 and 1/2 as many persons as there are vacancies to be filled. Those nominated must have indicated a willingness to serve if elected and meet the qualifications of Voting Membership specified in Article III, Section 1A. At least two Sundays before the annual meeting of the Church, this Nominating Committee shall place in the hands of the President of the Parish Council its report. The report shall be posted for all to see. Additional nominations may be made from the floor by any Voting Member at the Annual General Meeting, provided that such additional nominees have indicated their willingness to serve if elected and meet the qualifications of Voting Membership specified in Article III, Section 1A.
- C. The members of the Parish Council shall be elected by secret ballot, by plurality of ballots cast, at the Annual General Meeting of the Voting Membership of the Parish, but no later than the beginning of the next fiscal year. The tally of the ballots shall be made by a committee appointed by the President of the Parish Council for that purpose. No member nominated to the Parish Council may serve on the tally committee.
- D. The newly elected members and those referred to in Article III, Section 2 of the Parish Council, together with those of the Council whose terms have not expired will constitute the new Parish Council and will be installed by the Pastor.

Section 6. Duties of the Parish Council.

- A. Within thirty (30) days after their installation as the new Parish Council, the Council shall convene pursuant to a call by the Pastor and shall elect from their membership the officers of said Council. The Pastor or his duly appointed representative shall preside at the election meeting. The officers so elected shall consist of the

President, Vice-President, Treasurer and a Secretary, and such other officers as may be provided for in the By-Laws. In the event of the failure of the Pastor to issue such a call, the same may be issued by the retiring President, if the Presidents term as a member has not expired, or any two members of the newly elected Council. Immediately upon election of the officers, a list of the newly elected officers and members of the Council shall be mailed to the Metropolitan Archbishop for approval

- B. The Parish Council shall be representative of the Church in the administration of its properties and affairs. It shall be responsible for the receipt and disbursement of all general and special funds.
- C. The Parish Council shall have the right to promulgate and adopt By-Laws for the conduct of its meetings and affairs, provided however, that such By-Laws must be consistent with this Constitution and the Constitution of the Archdiocese.
- D. The Parish Council shall hold regular meetings for the purposes of conducting Church business.
- E. A quorum of seven elected members of the Parish Council will be required for the transaction of business. The President shall vote only in the event of a tie.
- F. Committees:
 - 1. The Parish Council shall create such standing committees, as they deem necessary to accomplish the purposes of the Church. The President shall appoint all members of such committees from the Membership of the Parish after consultation with the Pastor and other members of the Council and designate the Chair of each.
 - 2. The President shall create and appoint all other special committees the President deems necessary for the accomplishment of any special purpose of the Church.

ARTICLE VII FINANCE

Section 1. General Fund: The general contributions, pledges, dues and other general income of the Church, shall be deposited in a legally recognized banking institution and shall constitute the General Fund.

Section 2. Special Funds: The Parish Council may create other funds titled under specific or separate accounts for the purposes of receiving and accumulating pledges, gifts, inheritances, which may be designated for the fulfillment of any specific purpose or purposes not inconsistent with this Constitution.

Section 3. Investing: The Parish Council may invest and reinvest funds which have been accumulated under section 1 and 2 of Article II, in a manner consistent with the rules relating to trustees for prudent investment.

Section 4. It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer of the Parish Council to serve as the chief financial officer of all funds collected in behalf of the Church. The Treasurer may delegate the collecting of funds from the Church organizations to treasurers of the organizations

ARTICLE VIII

MEETINGS OF VOTING MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. There shall be an Annual Meeting of the Voting Membership of the Church, the time and place shall be determined by the Parish Council. The Annual Meeting shall take place no later than January of the next fiscal year.

Section 2. The Pastor shall be the presiding officer at the Annual Meeting of the Voting Membership of the Church, as well as at all special meetings of the Voting Membership. In the event the Pastor chooses not to preside, the President of the Parish Council shall preside.

Section 3. It shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Parish Council to send out notices of the Annual meeting by regular mail to all Voting Members of the Church at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting. The Secretary shall include a copy of the agenda with the notices that are mailed.

Section 4. The President of the Parish Council and the Presidents of every recognized organization of the Parish shall prepare in writing and present a report of their organization, its finances, its work projects, etc. for the past year. The Treasurer of the Council shall present the Annual Financial Report of the Church to the Voting Membership.

Section 5. The Voting Membership may initiate and enact any legislation, rules, special business, etc., not inconsistent with this Constitution, and such legislation, rules, etc., shall be binding on the Parish Council and all organizations of the Parish.

Section 6. Special Meetings.

- A. The Pastor and Parish Council shall have the power to call special meetings of the Voting Membership whenever it deems it necessary for any purpose, on a motion made and duly passed by a majority of the Parish Council at any regular meeting or special meeting duly called for that purpose. The President of the Parish Council shall set the time and place of such meeting. The Secretary shall send by regular mail the notice of such meeting and the purpose for which it is called at least ten (10) days prior to the convening of such meeting.
- B. A petition signed by twenty-five per cent (25%) of the Voting Members may call a special meeting of the Voting Membership whenever they deem it necessary for any purpose. The petition shall be delivered to the President of the Parish Council who shall set the time and place of such meeting. The Secretary shall send by regular mail the notice of such meeting and the purpose for which it is called at least ten (10) days prior to the convening of such meeting.
- C. No business may be transacted at any special meeting of the Voting Members other than that for which the meeting was called.

Section 7. Quorum: A quorum shall be constituted for the transaction of business at all meetings when a majority of the Voting Members are present that at the annual meeting, a quorum shall be constituted of those Voting Members present at the roll call.

Section 8. Proxy or absentee voting is not permitted.

Section 9. The most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall serve as a basis for conducting all meetings.

**ARTICLE IX
THE PROPERTY OF ST. GEORGE
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Section 1. Titles to all properties shall be held in the name of the Church, as specified in Article I of this Constitution. All titles, deeds, and other documents relating to the property shall be kept in the custody of the Parish Council.

Section 2. The Parish Council shall have no right to mortgage, lease, transfer, sell, or purchase any real property on behalf of the Church, unless it has been authorized to do so by a General Meeting of the Voting Membership of the Parish called for that purpose. A general or special meeting convened for such purpose shall be called by the Parish Council, and each Voting Member of the Church shall be issued, in writing, a specific notice setting forth the purpose of the meeting. No Church property shall be mortgaged, sold, leased, transferred, sold or purchased, except by a two-thirds vote of the Voting Members of the Church attending such a meeting and approval of the Metropolitan Archbishop.

Section 3. In the event of the dissolution of the Church, all its fund properties, equipment and endowments shall revert at once and forthwith to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese Of North America. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding, the provisions of this Section cannot be amended, altered, changed or modified, without approval of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese.

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This constitution, except as otherwise herein provided, may be amended, altered, changed or modified at a general or special meeting of the Church called for such specific purpose in writing. No amendments shall be binding or effective except by vote of two-thirds of the Voting Members of the Church attending such meeting and until such amendment has been approved by the Metropolitan Archbishop. No amendment shall be binding unless it is consistent with the Provisions of the Constitution of the Archdiocese.