

Chinese Baptist Church of Greater Boston Bylaws



Approved by members meeting
on 12/18/2016

Bylaw of the church

Chapter 1: General Principles

Item 1: The official name of this church is “CHINESE BAPTIST CHURCH OF GREATER BOSTON INCORPORATION.

Item 2: This church is established in Greater Boston area of Massachusetts, United States of America.

Item 3: This church carries out the great commission handed down by Lord Jesus Christ. The principle goals include preaching of gospel, leading people’s conversion to Christ, shepherding of believers, holding steadfast on the truth, maintaining contact within the congregation, worshipping and serving the true God. In addition, through activities including social service, education and charity, the gospel is demonstrated and the spirit of New Testament church is thereby put into practice.

Chapter 2: Doctrine

The fundamental beliefs of this church are listed below:

1. All 66 books in the Bible are inspired by God, without error; provide complete guidance for our faith and daily lives.
2. God is three persons in one, consisting of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, equal in authority and glory.
3. Jesus Christ was born of Virgin Mary come upon by the Holy Spirit. Jesus had been tempted in every way, but did not sin. Jesus was crucified and died on the cross for salvation of the world. He was raised from death on the third day. After resurrection, Jesus was taken up into Heaven. Jesus will return in glory and authority, reclaim sovereignty and judge the world. Both the righteous and the wicked will be brought up from death to face the judgment. Righteous people will receive eternal life while wicked people will face eternal condemnation.
4. Holy Spirit has personality, leads people to repentance from sin, inspires people’s heart and guides believers, eventually brings about sanctification of believers.
5. Ever since our ancestor sinned, human inherited the sinful nature, rebelled against God, lined up with the Devil. Human could not save themselves from evil, yet God let human retained the freedom of choice.
6. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith. Grace is the action of God, giving us His only begotten son, crucified and died on the cross to bear the penalty of sins for the world. Faith is the response of men, confess our sins, repent and accept Jesus Christ as our savior and dedicate our lives to Him.
7. The church is established according to the model recorded in the New Testament, and thereby known as a New Testament church. The church is the spiritual body formed voluntarily by local residents who believe and are baptized in Christ, with Christ as the head. Under Him, every member has equal rights and therefore, decision on church business is made by democratic means.
8. Since the creation of the world, marriage is the emotional, physical, and spiritual union between one man and one woman. The good plan of God, His sacred will is to unite a man and a woman in matrimony and they become one flesh. The Bible clearly states that all sexual relationships other than between a man and a woman married to each other, whether homosexual or other perverted relationships, are condemned. (Scriptural references: Genesis 2:21-25, Mark 10:6-9, Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, Romans 1:26-27 and I Corinthians 6:9-10.)

Chapter 3: Ceremonies

Item 4: This church sets up two main ceremonies according to instructions given in the New Testament scripture. These were both symbolic and do not carry the effect of salvation per se. All ceremonies are organized and conducted by the board of deacons.

1. Baptism

- a. Definition: This is a symbolic ceremony representing the commitment of believers to join in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The ceremony does not bear the effect of cleansing of sins.
- b. Method: This church adopts the rising up after whole body submersion method. If an individual cannot be baptized by the method adopted by this church by reasons of handicap, bodily weakness, serious illness or other conditions, the situation will be handled by board of deacons based on the particular circumstances.

2. The Lord's supper

This is the ceremony whereby believers join together in remembrance of Lord Jesus Christ, with the bread symbolizing the body of Christ and the cup symbolizing the blood of Christ. Members of the assembly must first examine themselves before partaking in this ceremony.

Chapter 4: Membership

Item 5: "Admittance to membership": Whoever is committed to join this church as member must go through any one of the following pathways to be admissible to the congregation.

1. Having passed the examination of religious beliefs and moral character by board of deacons, the individual is recommended and approved by the assembly of church members, followed by baptism.
2. A member of other acceptable Christian assembly must apply with a letter of recommendation from the original church and be examined by board of deacons both on religious belief and confession of faith represented by previously administered baptism. If found acceptable, this believer will be recommended to the assembly of church members for approval.
3. If a member of other acceptable Christian assembly cannot obtain a letter of recommendation because the original church no longer exists or unable to issue the required letter, the situation must be verified by pastor or member of this church. If found acceptable after examination by board of deacons both on religious belief and confession of faith represented by previously administered baptism, this individual can be recommended to assembly of church members for approval.

Item 6: "Transfer of membership": All members of this church join the congregation according to individual free will. If a member intends to transfer membership to other acceptable Christian assembly in other parts of the world, a request could be made for a letter of recommendation for transfer of membership. Upon approval by assembly of church members, the church will promptly proceed with the membership transfer process.

Item 7: "Cancellation of membership": All members of this church join the congregation according to individual free will. If a member remains absent from the assembly of this

church for one full calendar year without justifiable reason and does not respond to the repeated attempts of contact by this church in writing, the membership will be cancelled. Item 8: “Revocation of membership”: If any member of this church falls into anyone of the following situations refuses to repent in spite of admonishment by board of deacons based on Biblical doctrines, the membership will be revoked by the assembly of church members as recommended by board of deacons. The revoked member will be notified by writing.

1. Follows the beliefs of pagan religions or cults and deviates from the doctrine of this church.
2. Commits the serious sin of insulting the name of our Lord.
3. Intentionally breaks the regulations of this church.

Item 9: “Reinstatement of membership”: The procedures are listed below:

1. A member who has been recommended transfer to another Christian assembly can submit application to rejoin this church with a letter of recommendation from the current church. The procedures are the same as initial admittance to membership.
2. Member who has been cancelled or withdrawn from membership can submit reasons for absence from church assembly to the board of deacons, express resolution to be committed to this church. The membership could be reinstated upon approval by assembly of church members.
3. If revoked member repents and desires reinstatement of membership, an application must be submitted to this church. After examination by board of deacons, this individual must sincerely repent to the Lord in front of the assembly of church members. The church assembly will then make open decision on reinstatement of membership.

Chapter 5: Composition

Item 10: This church establishes the assembly of church members, church minister, board of deacons and church council, all based on instructions according to the scriptures.

1. Assembly of church members: This is the body with the highest authority, consisted of all church members, submits to the lordship of Christ and decides on all church business and proceedings according to the guidance handed down to the assembly from God.
2. Church minister (senior pastor or assistant pastor): A pastor or minister ordained by this church or recruited from another church serves as the spiritual leader of this congregation.
3. Board of deacons: This consists of church minister (senior pastor or assistant pastor) and all deacons, may be with additional members invited to participate in the board based on actual circumstances. Constituents include deacons ordained by this church and deacons ordained by other churches could also be accepted. This is a life long commitment in assisting church minister on all spiritual affairs.
4. Church council: This consists of the church minister, church council members and constituents from board of deacons (deacons representation should not be more than one third of the total church council members); together with other invited observing pastors or ministers. The council carries out the jobs assigned by assembly of church members and manages routine church business. Each term of council membership is two years, could be extended by re-election, but not more than two consecutive terms. Every year, one third of church council members

have to be replaced. Vacancies of retiring council members will be filled by new representatives elected by assembly of church members.

Item 11: The auditor for each year is appointed by the preceding annual general assembly meeting.

Chapter 6: Meetings

Item 12: The assigned date of meeting will be the official date for all church meetings. In principle, all items on the agenda will be decided by majority votes. Church members must participate in ballots at the appointed time for the vote to be valid.

Special matters listed below require different procedures.

1. For motions concerning ordination of pastors or deacons, the proposer must submit the signed and seconded motion in writing to board of deacons not later than three days before the general assembly meeting. During the meeting, the motion must be agreed on by two-thirds or more of voting church members to be regarded as approved by the general assembly.
2. For motions concerning initial or renewed employment of church staff, the proposer must submit the signed and seconded motion in writing to board of deacons not later than three weeks before the general assembly meeting. Board of deacons must announce the motion two weeks before the general assembly meeting. During the meeting, the motion must be agreed on by two-thirds or more of voting church members to be regarded as approved by the general assembly.

Item 13: General assembly meetings of this church include annual meeting, monthly meeting and ad hoc meeting. The presiding member will be chosen from the church council.

1. Annual assembly meeting: The church council will officially announce the date of annual meeting by November and the meeting must be held before January 31st of the upcoming year. Agenda of the annual meeting includes church business report and financial report, approval of the preceding year audit report, approval of the budget for the upcoming year and discussions on the items prepared by church council. Any church member who wishes to bring up additional items to be discussed in the annual meeting should submit the motion in writing to church council no later than seven days before the meeting date. Church council is authorized to determine whether to put the item on annual meeting agenda or defer it to the upcoming monthly assembly meeting. Apart from the items already listed on agenda, no discussion will be held for new motions brought up during the meeting.
2. Monthly assembly meeting: Monthly assembly meetings are held on the fourth Lord's Day in each month at the conclusion of Sunday service. The agenda of monthly meeting is prepared by church council. However, ad hoc motions demanding urgent attention may still be brought up during the meeting for immediate decision. If these do not require urgent decision and a longer period of discussion is deemed necessary, the item will be tabled and deferred to the next upcoming monthly meeting.
3. Ad hoc assembly meeting: In the face of important church business demanding urgent decision, the church council will announce the organization of an ad hoc

assembly meeting no later than one week before the date of meeting. The announcement could also be made during Sunday service.

Chapter 7: Church Gatherings

Item 15: The regular gatherings of this church include Sunday services, Bible study and prayer meetings, Sunday schools and fellowship meetings. Attendance by all church members is mandatory.

Item 16: Evangelical classes are held from time to time to teach and explain the basic truths of Christianity to church attendees. Revival evangelical meetings will also be held several times in each year to reach out and preach the gospel. All church members are responsible for invitation of friends and relatives to these meetings.

Item 17: Fellowships in this church are organized according to age ranges for training of church members. All members should participate in the fellowships appropriate for their age group for the purpose of edification.

Chapter 8: Finance

Item 18: The amount of cash savings and the bank for saving accounts of this church should be determined by general church member assembly meeting. Authorized signatories are chairperson of church council, treasurer and finance administrator. Valid documents must bear the signatures of any two of the above listed personnel.

Item 19: The operating fund of this church is solely contributed by church members. Unless approved by the assembly of church members, this church will not accept donations from any outside organizations or individuals.

Item 20: All members of this church are responsible for financial contributions. This is based on clear instructions from the scriptures. All believers should be faithful managers, giving the required tithes to God's house.

Item 21: All income and expense records of this church are open to public. Finance administrator is obligated to give a detail report of the church account every month.

Item 22: Financial management of this church is unified. Contributions and expenditure of various departments are all subjected to the management of this church.

Chapter 9: Appendix

Item 23: If deficiency were found in this bylaw of the church, four or more church members submit a joint written proposal for amendment to the church council. The proposal will be studied by church council, then brought up for amendment in church member assembly meeting. During the meeting, the amendment must be agreed on by three fourths or more of voting church members to be regarded as approved by the general assembly.

Item 24: This bylaw of the church has been approved by the general assembly meeting held on June 29th 2003.

Item 25: two items are added:

1. Members of the congregation are restrained from selling the church property for profit. Under the circumstances that the church could not be maintained and has to be sold, all proceeds from the sale will belong to Baptist Convention of New England to be used on church planting ministry.
2. In chapter 6 of the bylaws concerning church meetings, add item 12, paragraph 3: The right to vote is extended only to church members age 18 and older.

Item 25 has been approved by monthly members meeting held on June 27, 2010.

The original bylaw in Chinese is the only authorized version that should always be referred to. This is only the English translation of the original Chinese version.