

CONSTITUTION

April 11, 2021

**CHESTER AVENUE COMMUNITY CHURCH
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA**

PREAMBLE

Placing our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our eternal salvation, believing in the teaching of the scriptures, we stand on the following principles.

1. The preeminence of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. The Trinity of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one in essence but distinct in person.
3. The supreme authority of the Bible, infallible and inspired Word of God, and its sufficiency as our only rule of faith and practice.
4. The right of private interpretation and the competency of the individual in direct approach to God.
5. A regenerate Church membership.
6. The symbolic ordinances of Believer's Baptism, in obedience to the command of Christ. Believer baptism shall be the standard practice of this church. And the Lord's Supper in remembrance of His atoning death and in anticipation of His return.
7. The independence of the local church and its interdependence in associated fellowship with other churches.
8. The spiritual unity of all believers.
9. The separation of church and state.
10. A world-wide program of missions and evangelism.

We, therefore, band ourselves together as a body of believers in Jesus Christ and adopt for our government, a plan of worship and service, the following articles.

**ARTICLE I
CORPORATE NAME**

This organization shall be known as the Chester Avenue Community Church of Bakersfield, California, and incorporated under the laws of California as the name stated on the Articles of Incorporation of 1952.

**ARTICLE II
RELATIONSHIPS**

Section 1. Relationships: The government of this church shall be vested in the body of believers that comprise it. It is the purpose of this church to affiliate with Transformation Ministries.

**ARTICLE III
PURPOSE**

(INSERT)

Experience God
Change your life.
Change the world

by

Being disciples who makes disciples.

**ARTICLE IV
MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. Qualifications: Any person subscribing to the preceding preamble and Articles I through III, may qualify for being a member by completing and signing THE CACC MEMBERSHIP COVENANT (page 28-30 Discovering Church Membership) and being a committed follower of Jesus.

Section 2. Admission: Upon completing and signing THE CACC MEMBERSHIP COVENANT, and being otherwise qualified for membership, the applicant shall be recommended for membership to the Board of Elders and Deacons which shall vote on that recommendation according to Article V, Section 9.

Section 3. Duties of Members: Members are expected to be faithful in all spiritual duties essential to the Christian life, which may include habitual attendance to the services of the Church, to give regularly for its support and charities, and to share in its organized work, as one is able to do.

Section 4. Member Dismissal. A member may be dismissed to the fellowship of another church by letter upon vote of the Board of Elders, according to Article V, Section 9. A member who has been absent from the church for a period of one year without manifesting an interest therein by communication with the church or by contributing to its support, and who indicates no interest after being contacted by the Board of Elders or their designate, shall be dropped from the membership roll by a vote of the Board of Elders. Reasonable exceptions shall be made for such things as armed forces duty, college and home bound. Dismissal for cause shall be stated in Section 5.

Section 5. Grievances: All cases of grievances between members shall be dealt with in accordance with the rules laid down in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, and no public complaint shall be heard until this course has been pursued. Charges, when made, shall be in writing, signed by at least two members in good standing (Article IV, Section 3), and submitted to the Board of Elders for resolution. Recommendation for dismissal from the membership must be approved by the Board of Elders.

Section 6. Restoration to membership: Any person whose membership has been terminated may be restored by vote of the Board of Elders upon evidence of that person's repentance and reformation.

Section 7. Voting Privileges: The right to vote on matters submitted to the church membership by the Board of Elders and annual meetings shall be vested in members on the active roll of age 18 and over. Members must be present to vote, proxy votes will not be accepted.

Section 8. Membership meetings:

A. ANNUAL MEETING

There shall be an Annual Business Meeting. There shall be an annual election and budget meeting in March or early April (before April 15) at which time voting by ballot for elective positions and adoption of budget shall take place. At the Annual Meeting, annual reports of Officers, Boards, Committees and Organizations shall also be presented.

B. SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings may be called by the Board of Elder, or a group of fifteen (15%) per cent of the voting members presenting a written request to the Board of Elders.

Section 9. Notice of Membership Meetings: Notice of all special meetings shall be announced at two (2) preceding Sunday morning services, and by special notice by mail postmarked at least one week in advance, or notice in the monthly Communicator which shall also be postmarked at least one week in advance.

Section 10. Membership Meeting Quorum and Decisions. At all church meetings, twenty (20%) per cent of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum. Decisions shall be by a super majority (2/3) vote of the members present.

ARTICLE V
BOARD OF ELDERS (DIRECTORS)

Section 1. General Qualifications:

- A All pastors and members of the Board of Elders shall be familiar with the Church Constitution and such Bylaws as may be adopted by the Board of Elders. They shall have the spiritual qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and Galatians 3:26-29.
- B. Other church members serving in a leadership or ministry capacity shall strive to meet the qualifications of a Deacon as in I Timothy 3:8-13.
- C. All positions of leadership require spiritual maturity and a commitment to following Christ which is

exemplary. Recognizing that none are perfect, all should be striving toward Christ likeness in all areas of living. The fruit of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22-23 should be evident in the lives of all leaders.

- D. Each member of the Board of Elders must be a member in good standing (Article IV, Section 3) of this church and must manifest wholehearted agreement with the Preamble in this constitution. Except for the Senior Pastor, an Elder of this church must have been a member of this church for at least two years.

Section 2. Authority, Powers and Responsibilities:

A. AUTHORITY

Final authority for any matter of church government or business rests with the congregation. The Board of Elders, elected by the congregation, shall exercise authority on behalf of and under the authority of the congregation. It shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining the basic policies and practices of the church, church discipline, fiscal direction, which includes budget setting and may review, revise, or reverse the decisions of any lower committees, officers, or staff members as it deems appropriate. The congregation shall be responsible for decisions regarding the calling and dismissal of the Senior Pastor, and any matters beyond the province of the Board of Elders.

The congregation shall be responsible for all decisions relating to the purchase or sale of all real property and other capital items exceeding ten (10%) percent of the active annual budget, as well as all decisions relative to creating all indebtedness leading to a contract pay schedule.

B. POWERS

Subject to the limitations and provisions of the California Non-profit Religious Corporation Law, other applicable laws, and this constitution, all the activities, affairs and powers of this corporation shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Elders who are the Directors of the corporation and responsible for shepherding and overseeing this church (Acts 20:17, 28, 29, Hebrews 13:17, I Peter 5:1-4). Specifically included are the powers:

(A) To select and remove all corporate officers, staff, employees and agents of the corporation, prescribe their duties, and fix their term of service and compensation.

(B) To make such disbursements from corporate funds and properties as are required to fulfill the purposes of this corporation.

(C) To establish policies and practices consistent with the purposes of this corporation.

(D) To resolve any disputes arising between members of this corporation. Any dispute which cannot be resolved is to be taken to a Christian arbitration service.

(E) To incur indebtedness and cause such evidences to be executed consistent with the purposes of this corporation.

(F) To delegate any and all such duties to others at the discretion of the Board.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the over all administration, spiritual life, finances, ministries, Christian Education, plant management and any leadership issues important to the life and function of the church.

Section 3. Number of Elders: The Board shall consist of no less than five (5) Elders, the exact number to be fixed by resolution of the Board.

Section 4. Senior Pastor Elder: The Senior Pastor of this church shall be an Elder who leads well and labors in the Word and doctrine (I Timothy 5:17). He shall serve on the Board of Elders indefinitely unless he resigns or is removed from the Board according to the provisions of Article V, section 6 of this constitution. The Senior Pastor will be subject to his fellow Elders, but will not be subject to the reaffirmation process set forth in this constitution that applies to other members of the Board. In the event of a vacancy in the position of Senior Pastor, the Board of Elders will appoint a

Pastoral Search Committee as directed in Article XI in this Constitution. Upon approving the search committee's candidate, the Board will present him to the church membership for confirmation.

Section 5. Selection of Elders: Each fiscal year, the Board of Elders shall determine the number of positions, if any to be filled on said board for the coming fiscal year and appoint a nominating committee of no less than five (5) church members meeting at minimum the qualifications of deacon. No more than two (2) Elders may serve on the nominating committee. Recommendations for the office will be requested from all church members reviewed by the committee for qualifications and a proposed slate submitted to the Elders for their final selection. The names of approved nominees shall be published on the two (2) successive Sundays prior to the annual meeting. Questions raised by any church member regarding the qualifications of a nominee should be presented first to the nominee and then to the Board of Elders for consideration. The slate of nominees finally approved by the Board will be presented to the church members at the annual meeting for confirmation and a service of dedication. In the event of vacancy or special need, the Elders may either fill the vacancy from previous nominees until the next annual meeting or re-initiate the whole selection process.

Section 6. Tenure of Elders: Except for the Senior Pastor, each Elder shall commit to serve for a minimum of two (2) years subject to review, recommitment and reaffirmation by the church every two years. Resignation for all Elders is by written notice of at least thirty (30) days delivered to the Chairman or Secretary of the Board. The Board may remove any Elder for personal, domestic, or ministerial disqualification. Removal of an Elder from the Board of Elders will require a 3/4 majority vote of the Board of Elders and written notice shall be postmarked and sent to the elder under question regarding the meeting and the purpose of the meeting at least one week in advance of the meeting.

Section 7. Meetings of Elders: Regular meetings of the Board of Elders shall be held without call or notice at such time as will be fixed by a resolution of said Board. Special meetings may be called at any time or for any purpose by the Chairman, or by two (2) members of the Board. Meetings are to be conducted according to Scriptural principles as set forth in Philippians 2:2-8 and Roberts Rules of Order. Minutes of all meetings shall be available by request of any member no later than two (2) weeks after the request.

Section 8. Notice of Special Board Meetings: Special meetings shall be held upon five (5) days notice by first class mail or email sent to such address as provided by the Elder for notice purposes, or upon twenty-four (24) hour notice given personally, by telephone, or by other similar means of communication.

Section 9. Board of Elders Meeting Quorum and Decisions: A majority of the Board of Elders shall constitute a quorum. Decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration and by a two-thirds (2/3) vote in a spirit of humility, each Elder regarding one another before himself.

Section 10. Compensation: Except for expense reimbursements, Elders shall receive no compensation as Directors of the corporation. However, Elders serving on staff shall be employees of the corporation and as such will be duly compensated. Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from this church shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of said compensation.

ARTICLE VI **OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION AND BOARD OF ELDERS**

Section 1. Officers: The officers of this corporation shall be Chairman of the Board of Elders, Vice-Chairman of the Board of Elders, Secretary of the Board of Elders, and Treasurer of the Board of Elders. These four officers are jointly titled as Trustees of the corporation and will be specifically appointed by the Board.

- A. Chairman of the Board of Elders: The Chairman shall preside at meetings of the Board of Elders and shall be the official moderator of the church. The Chairman shall be ex officio member of all committees. The Chairman shall act as, and be the President of the corporation.
- B. Vice-Chairman of the Board of Elders: The Vice-Chairman shall act as, and be the Vice-President of the corporation. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman will assume his responsibilities. In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Board shall appoint an Elder to act in their place.
- C. Secretary: The Secretary shall be the Secretary of the corporation and the Church Clerk. The Church Clerk shall keep an accurate and permanent record of the proceedings of all business meetings of the church and the Board of Elders. This officer shall be responsible for all membership records, issue letters of request for new members and for dismissals, and other correspondence of church business. A Recording Secretary shall be appointed by the Board to keep an accurate record of the proceedings at meetings of the membership and the Board of Elders.
- D. Treasurer: The Treasurer will serve as the Treasurer of the corporation. The Treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements, be responsible for receipts, which shall commence when receipts have been deposited in a bank to the credit of the church, by the Financial Secretary. Disbursements shall be made by the Treasurer upon approval by Annual Budget and/or of the Board of Elders. The Treasurer shall make monthly reports to the Board of Elders, and annual reports to the church membership.
All checks shall be signed by the Treasurer and any other designated member of the Board of Elders. Two (2) signatures, in the Treasurer's absence, any two of the designated signers may sign checks. The Treasurer shall arrange for an independent audit to take place annually which shall be submitted to the Board of Elders and to the Membership.
- E. Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary shall be selected by the membership of the Elders in keeping with Article V, Section 5. The Financial Secretary receives and counts monies of the Church, promptly depositing such receipts to the credit of the Church in a bank approved by the Board of Elders. He/she shall make monthly reports to the Board of Elders and annual report to the church membership individually and corporately. The Financial Secretary will hold in confidence all knowledge of personal giving. The Financial Secretary will always have a member in good standing assist in counting any monies received for deposit.

ARTICLE VII
COUNCIL OF DEACONS AND DEACONESSES

Section 1. **Responsibilities of Deacons:** Acting under the leadership of the Board of Elders, the Council is called to provide service by leading in the following areas:

- A. Intercessory Prayer
- B. Hospitality
- C. Membership Care
- D. Bereavement
- E. Ushers/Greeters
- F. Visitation/Homebound/ill
- G. Assistance at Baptisms
- H. Communion
- I. Collection and utilization of Diaconate Fund
- J. Assist in the financial undertakings of the church including the disbursal of funds to the needy.
- K. Carry out ministry roles as assigned or approved by the Board of Elders.

Section 2. **Leadership of Deacons:** The Council of Deacons shall be led by a member of the Board of Elders duly appointed by the Board of Elders and not subject to the term limitations of deacon.

Section 3. **Number of Deacons:** The exact number of members of the Council of Deacons shall be fixed by resolution of the Board of Elders.

Section 4. **Qualifications of Deacons:** Each member of the Council must be a member in good standing of this church and possess the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:8-12. Members must manifest wholehearted agreement with the Preamble in this constitution. A Deacon or Deaconess of this church must have been a member of this church for at least one year.

Section 5. **Selection of Deacons:** Members of this Council shall be selected by the Board of Elders.

Section 6. **Tenure of Deacons:** Each member of the Council shall be subject to review, recommitment and reaffirmation by the Board of Elders every two years. Resignation is by written notice of at least thirty (30) days delivered to the Chairman or Secretary of the Board. The Board of Elders may remove any member for personal, domestic or ministerial disqualification.

ARTICLE IX **COMMITTEES AND MINISTRIES**

Section 1. **Appointment:** The Board of Elders may by resolution create various ministries to serve at the discretion of the Board.

Section 2. **Qualifications:** All members of any church committee must be members in good standing of this church and must be approved by the Board of Elders, serving at its discretion. All church congregation staff pastors, ministry directors, administrators, officers, and teachers must be members in good standing of this church and possess, at minimum, the qualifications for deacon and deaconess described in I Timothy 3:8-13. Elders shall be *ex-officio* members of all committees. Likewise, executive directors of external ministries established by the Board of Elders (e.g. educational institutions, missions organizations, social agencies) must also be members in good standing of this church and possess the same qualifications as above.

Section 3. **Functions:** Committees and ministries shall perform tasks specifically delegated by the Board of Elders. They shall exist for the period specified by the Board and bring considered recommendations to the Elders, providing them with a wider base of counsel.

ARTICLE X **TERMS OF OFFICE**

Section 1. **The Pastor and Staff:**

- A. Pastor. The Pastor and Staff shall serve for an indefinite period. The relationship of Pastor, Staff and Church may be dissolved after 60 days notice by either party. Notice may be waived by mutual consent. Dismissal of Pastor requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority ballot vote. A quorum for such action will be one-third (1/3) of active resident church members qualified to vote.
- B. Ministerial Staff: A ministerial staff dismissal will be accomplished by a resolution of the Board of Elders with a two-thirds (2/3) vote needed. A 60-day notice to staff members will be required.
- C. Non-ministerial personnel may be dismissed by the Board of Elders with two weeks notice or immediately with two weeks severance pay.

ARTICLE XI
CALLING OF THE PASTOR

Section 1

The Pastor shall be an ordained Minister, or seeking ordination. When there is a pastoral vacancy, the Board of Elders shall elect a Pastoral Search Committee of seven (7) members. This committee shall be a representative committee with three members from the Board of Elders, and four (4) members at large approved by a membership vote. This shall be a representative committee with not more than one (1) member from any family.

Section 2

The Pastoral Search Committee shall present only one (1) recommendation for Pastor for consideration at one time.

Section 3

Notice on two (2) successive Sundays shall be given to the church for a meeting to consider the calling of a pastor, with written notice to the membership during this period.

Section 4

An affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those voting by ballot shall be necessary to extend a call to a Pastor. One-third (1/3) of the active resident membership qualified to vote shall constitute a quorum for the calling of a Pastor.

Section 5

The call of other ministerial staff members shall be upon the recommendation by the Pastor and approval of the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE XII
AMENDMENTS

Any article or section of this constitution may be amended or expanded at a duly called membership meeting by a 2/3 vote of the members present. Proposed amendments or expansions must be printed and provided to the congregation on the two (2) successive Sundays prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE XIII
DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY

Section 1. Division

In the event of organic division of the church membership the church property shall belong to those members who abide by this constitution and its original intent of fellowship with the Transformation Ministries.

Section 2. Dissolution

Should conditions arise where, for any reason, this church cannot continue, the property shall be transferred to Transformation Ministries.

ARTICLE XIV
CHURCH YEAR

The church fiscal year shall be from April 1, to March 31.

ARTICLE XV
RULES OF ORDER

The rules of parliamentary practice as stated in Roberts Rules of Order are adopted for the government of business meetings.