



CHARTER

OF THE APOSTOLIC COMMUNION
OF CHURCHES—THE 2019 EDITION

APOSTOLIC COMMUNION OF CHURCHES
THE COMMUNION BODY OF CHRISTIAN LIFE CATHEDRAL MINISTRIES, INC.

Charter of the Apostolic Communion of Churches

2019 Edition of the Charter of the Apostolic Communion of Churches

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Preamble

Whereas the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc., provides for the establishment of a communion of churches and ministries to minister to those churches and ministries affiliated with Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc.; and whereas the Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc.'s Bylaws establish how churches and ministries may affiliate with Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc.; and whereas the corporate parent and body of the said communion shall serve as the national cathedral and mother see of the communion, and the Archbishop of the said communion shall always serve as the senior pastor thereof; therefore, the senior pastor and executive board of Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc., establishes the Apostolic Communion of Churches in charter.

Name

The communion of churches and ministries established by the Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc. is the *Apostolic Communion of Churches*, and it shall operate in good faith within the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc.

Ethos

The Apostolic Communion of Churches is an extension of the ministry of Christian Life Ministries International, Inc. (now Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc.) and its bishop, Thomas Henry Jr.

The purpose of the Apostolic Communion of Churches, known hereon within this Charter also as the "Apostolic Communion," "ACC", or simply, "the Communion", shall be: for religious, charitable and educational purposes; to live and spread the orthodox, historic, Biblical Christian faith (Matthew 22:37-39; 28:19-20) in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation, Statement of Faith, and Bylaws of Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc., and in accordance with the policies and guidelines of the bishop (senior pastor of the Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc., hereon known as the "Christian Life Cathedral", "CLC", or "CLCM") and executive board of Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc.

To fulfill the religious, charitable and educational purposes stated above, the Christian Life Cathedral's executive board adopts the following goals and objectives:

A) to seek out the lost and lead them to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior according to Luke 14:23; 19:10 and John 20:21;

B) to provide comprehensive training to students of all ages in the Word of God—the Holy Bible—in each and all doctrines found therein, including training for those who express an interest in the pastoral ministry and have been so gifted by God to serve in that office according to Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:11-14; Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:15; Titus 2:15; Hebrews 5:14-6:1-3; and 1 Peter 3:15;

C) to provide an opportunity for each person, whosoever will, according to Matthew 16:24-25 and Luke 9:23, to engage in a worldwide effort to carry forth the Gospel Message to every person of every nation as written in Mark 16:15 and Acts 1:8-9;

D) to foster Christian culture in terms of refinement, appreciation, social attitudes, skills, and to thereby develop a compassionate response to the needs of society as commanded in the Word of God in Matthew 22:39; John 13:35; Galatians 2:10; and James 1:27; 2:15-16.

Mission

The mission statement of the Apostolic Communion of Churches is to represent the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in doctrine, worship, and practice; to be a place where people can experience the awesome power of God, hear the Word of God proclaimed faithfully, and go forth empowered by the Holy Spirit to change the world in which they live; to reach the various generations with the truth and power of the Gospel of Christ; to develop programs and ministries that will impact Metro Atlanta, the surrounding areas, and the world for the Lord Jesus Christ; to further the reach of the Kingdom of God through quality Christian ministry that yields genuine fruits of evangelism, discipleship, and soul-winning; to develop a multi-cultural ministry that will reach out and rescue the lost, rejected, wounded and hurting from a decaying world and bring them into the arms of a loving Savior; to be a living expression of the catholic Church, representing the sacramental, reformed, evangelical, and pentecostal expressions of the Church; to be a place of prophetic

education and spiritual renewal; to be a place where the sacraments of man's redemption are regularly celebrated with faithful use of the words of the Savior; to be a communion that is orthodox and Bible-believing in its theology, and pentecostal-charismatic in its ethos; to train, license and ordain ministers of the Gospel; and to establish and assist like-minded churches and ministries that will do the same.

The Apostolic Communion of Churches fully commits itself to the propagation of the unchanging Gospel of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. We further again write the commitment of ourselves to the formation of genuine disciples who are saved, Bible-believing and Spirit-filled and who believe in the ultimate authority of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and the sovereignty of God. The Communion further reaffirms its commitment to proclaiming Christ in word and sacrament.

Beliefs

The Apostolic Communion of Churches and its parent body, the Christian Life Cathedral, are a Bible-believing, Spirit-filled communion and church. The Communion and Cathedral are places where the gifts of the Holy Spirit are freely expressed for the edification of the believers. The Apostolic Communion of Churches, through the mother see of Christian Life Cathedral, is a place of prophetic education and spiritual growth.

Among such beliefs, the Communion underscores and commends: a belief in the sovereignty of God; a high view of Holy Scripture in affirming the critical importance of preaching, public reading of the Word of God, and personal Bible study; the use of the Nicene Creed as a statement of faith, and the Apostles' Creed as a baptismal creed; a belief in the regular celebration of the sacraments of the Gospel (Baptism and the Lord's Supper, also called Holy Communion); a high view of the Church and a need for the people of God to gather together often for the worship of God and listening to His Holy Word; the doctrine of saving grace by faith; the real spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist and a baptism that is effectual; the real presence and work of the Holy Spirit through gifts and signs as imparted to believers for service and witness; and a belief in the supporting of ministry through the giving of tithes and offerings.

Faith

The Apostolic Communion of Churches holds that the Bible of the Old and New Testaments is the Word of God, and that they contain all things necessary unto salvation and holiness. The Communion furthermore holds to the principle of *prima scriptura* (scripture first) as the ultimate rule of faith. In addition to the principle beliefs laid out beforehand, the Apostolic Communion of Churches ascribes to the following statement of faith mentioned below, stating below:

“We believe the Holy Bible of the Old and New Testament to be the inspired and only infallible written Word of God; we believe that there is one God eternally existent in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; we believe in the Blessed Hope, which is the rapture of the Church of God, which is in Christ at His return; we believe that the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Jesus Christ; we believe that regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for personal salvation; we believe that redemptive work of Christ on the cross provides healing and health for the human body and prosperity for the soul in answer to believing prayer; we believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to believers who ask for it; we believe in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy and separated life in this present world; we believe in the giving into the storehouse treasury of God in response to His love and kindness He has shown to us through our tithes, offering, and gifts of love. Amen.”

Structure

The Apostolic Communion of Churches shall consist of all clergy, churches and para-church ministries that shall make application for affiliation and/or membership with one of its dioceses or the Office of the Archbishop-Metropolitan (the “Archbishop”). The clergy, churches, and para-church ministries shall be able to affiliate with the Communion, as clergy incardinated in a diocese, a member church, affiliated church and/or para-church ministry. Each clergy, church and para-church ministry shall come under the spiritual overseership and chief pastoral ministry of the Communion’s Archbishop, their vicars, and the diocesan bishop of the diocese they are incardinated in.

There shall be a presbyterial council (the “Apostolic Council”) for the Communion consisting of the Archbishop, the Vicar General, the Episcopal Vicar(s), General Secretary, General Treasurer, Director of Vocations, Director of Protocol, Director of Women Ministries, and three other persons from around the Communion (they must be a bishop or clergy). They shall be appointed by the bishop of Christian Life Cathedral and confirmed by the remaining members of the Council. The affairs of the Communion shall be managed by the Archbishop (President, CEO, Metropolitan and Chief Apostle of the Communion), in consultation with the Apostolic Council. The Communion shall have three council members initially.

The Communion may increase the number of council members, but it shall never be less than three nor more than, fifteen. The council shall assist the Archbishop in shaping the policy and direction of the Communion in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, doctrine, discipline and worship of Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc.

The Archbishop shall be the president/chief executive officer of the Communion and shall have general powers of appointment. As President of the Communion, they shall be the chief pastor and Chief Apostle of the Apostolic Communion of Churches, and shall provide counsel and advice to clergy, churches, and ministries. They shall provide for the ordination, installation, and the recognition of gifts and ministries either personally or through the diocesan bishop. The Archbishop alone can approve the consecration of bishops and apostles for the Communion and appoint diocesans with the consent of the House of Bishops. He shall select the most qualified ministers to serve as diocesan bishops. They shall serve as diocesan bishop of their diocese as long as their services are profitable to the people and ministers in their areas. The license and ordination certificates shall bear the signature of the Archbishop and their seal or their name, and their seal of the Communion if they are signed by diocesan bishops.

The Archbishop shall be chosen by the House of Bishops unto the recommendation of the sitting Archbishop and shall be instituted as Archbishop-Coadjutor by the Archbishop. The Coadjutor automatically assumes office on the death or resignation of the Archbishop. The House of Bishops shall no later than six months officially enthrone them with the Archbishop handing them the crozier and seating them in the cathedra.

If the Archbishop has not appointed one, then the Apostolic Council shall meet after the death or resignation of the Archbishop to nominate a new archbishop. They shall submit either one or more candidates to the House of Bishops who shall meet in closed-door session and elect the new Archbishop. The Archbishop-Elect shall be enthroned within three months of their election and the Dean of the House of Bishops shall proceed to invest and enthrone them into office in a service designated by the House of Bishops for such purposes. If the Dean is the Archbishop-Elect, then the most senior bishop as it relates to consecration shall preside. The Archbishop shall serve as senior pastor of the mother cathedral. Failure to take possession of the mother church as its senior pastor within three months of their election will mean a forfeiture of the office of Archbishop. The office of Archbishop is not separate from the office of senior pastor of Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc.

To assist them in their work as the Chief Apostle of the Communion, the Archbishop shall select one or more Episcopal Vicars. One of the Episcopal Vicars will be designated as Vicar General and shall be the most senior assistant to the Archbishop, who shall possess their authority in most matters except those matters reserved by the Charter or the Archbishop personally to themselves. The Vicar General shall serve the Chief Operating Officer of the Communion. The United States of America shall be divided into two episcopal vicariates—Eastern and Western, with an Episcopal Vicar assigned to each. There shall be one Foreign Episcopal Vicar to handle churches and ministries outside of the United States of America's territories.

The House of Bishops shall be the chief legislative and doctrine-expressing body of the Apostolic Communion of Churches. They shall speak pastorally to the Communion and to the world. The Archbishop shall preside as chair at all times unless their actions are being reviewed (they can only be removed for heresy, adultery, being convicted as a felon of a heinous crime or violating the ethical standards of the Communion). They shall confirm the appointment of all bishops.

There shall be a Dean and Vice-Dean chosen by the House of Bishops. They shall be consulted for wisdom and serve as Vice-Chairs and in the absence of the Archbishop and, with the Archbishop's consent, preside over such meetings. They shall automatically preside over the House in the event of the death or resignation of the Archbishop to elect a new Archbishop if there is no coadjutor. The House of Bishops shall serve as a court to trial any and all bishops of the Communion.

The Apostolic Communion's ministry shall be divided into dioceses whose boundaries shall be geographically based on national or state boundaries and may consist of more than one state or country. These dioceses shall be lead and coordinated by their diocesan bishops. The diocese can, at the discretion of the Archbishop, elect its own bishop subject to the Archbishop's approval and confirmation by the House of Bishops. If this process is used the candidate is not Bishop-Elect until all channels have approved the diocese's choice. Then the Archbishop will issue an apostolic mandate proclaiming the election. Once the presbyter has replied and accepted it, they shall be officially Bishop-Elect as per the apostolic mandate issued and received. The diocesan bishop is the pastor of their diocese/local church. He is the president/chief executive officer of the diocese and has general powers of appointment for the diocese subject to confirmation by the presbyterial council of the diocese.

It shall be the duty of the diocesan bishops to preach the Word of God, giving their time and talent and influence for the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout their dioceses, such that the greatest possible good may be accomplished and greatest number of souls be saved. They shall maintain a list of clergy, churches and para-church ministries in their diocese and submit the same annually in their Diocesan Report to the Office of the Archbishop and the Office of the General Secretary. They shall conduct conferences and seminars; they will build up the clergy, churches, and ministries in their areas. They shall provide counsel and advice to members of the Communion in their area when asked. They shall be accountable to the Archbishop and the House of Bishops.

The diocesan bishop shall ordain all elders and deacons for their diocese and license all clergy therein. All clergy persons that are licensed and ordained for work in a diocese are considered to be incardinated into the same. They shall either through their bishop or personally register their ordination within 60 days with the General Secretary with the appropriate fees to receive a fellowship card that shows their standing with the Apostolic Communion of Churches and their local diocese. The credential fee and report shall be submitted annually to the Office of the General Secretary to maintain "communion" and good standing with the Communion.

The diocesan shall appoint directly or after the congregation has elected them pastors to all congregations in their diocese and shall provide for the installation of the same.

The diocesan shall be the chief canon missionary for their diocese. They shall do the work of a missionary and evangelist and look for places where new churches can be planted and provide for the training of their clergy. The diocese structure shall mirror the national structure with a Vicar General who shall at least be a presbyter. If the diocese is large enough, then it can be divided into episcopal vicariates headed by presbyters or with an auxiliary bishop. Auxiliary bishops are chosen by the diocesan and appointed by the Archbishop and confirmed by the House of Bishops.

Auxiliary bishops will only be allowed in a diocese if the needs demand one and only at the discretion of the Archbishop.

The diocese may be divided into districts headed by a district elder or presiding elder. The Communion prefers not to use the title overseer and it is discontinued with the 2019 Edition, following upon the 2015 Revision. Only those currently with the title may make use of such. Each diocese shall have a presbyterial council, a general secretary and a general treasurer, a vocation director, director of protocol, director of women ministries, and such other officers as are needed. Each diocese shall hold an annual convocation by whatever name they wish to call it for the bringing together their people for worship, fellowship, inspiration, preaching and the conduction of diocesan business. The two delegates from the churches and clergy of the diocese shall form a diocesan synod which shall be the legislative body for the diocese annually, and if it has that authority, elect a new bishop with the approval of the proper authorities as mention elsewhere in the Charter.

All pastors and churches in the Communion shall be under the overseership and diocesan pastoral ministry of a diocesan bishop of the Communion. The pastor shall have the general powers of appointment in the local congregation and shall be the president/chief executive officer thereof. He, together with the executive board (or whatever the board is called), shall manage the day-to-day operations of the congregation. The pastor and clergy shall have licenses and paperwork issued to them by their bishop.

If it is a congregation received into the Communion, then they need to apply for ordination within 30 to 60 days of being received into the Communion through a diocese. Each church shall observe the Communion's ethos. Each church shall own their own property and may establish their own constitution as long as they are agreeable to the Charter and the diocesan constitution.

Each church shall have only those ministries and auxiliaries they need to operate effectively. Each church shall regularly celebrate the sacraments of redemption—Baptism and Holy Communion, otherwise known as the Lord’s Supper. Communion shall be offered in both kinds to all those who are baptized and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and God.

Worship should be orderly, and the hymns of the church used by song in the worship service. The Word of God should be preached in every service for the edification and building up of the body of Christ, and the salvation of souls. Each church should work with their bishop to plant other churches in the diocese that they belong in. No one should serve as clergy if they do not have standing with the Apostolic Communion and the Apostolic Communion’s diocese in their state.

All clergy and churches should adhere to the Communion Clerical Dress Code and Standards of Ministerial Ethics. No clergy who is not a bishop or apostle, should wear the garb thereof without dispensation from the Office of the Archbishop. The purple and red shirts are reserved colors and no elder or deacon should wear clergy shirts with those colors. This includes assuming titles that one has not been designated by the Archbishop and/or House of Bishops.

While subscribing to the traditional ordained ministry by the imposition of the hands for the consecration and ordination of episcopos (bishops and apostles), presbyters (pastor/priest/elder), and diakonos (deacons), we also recognize the ministries of 1 Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 4:11 and Romans 12:5-10. We believe these ministries should operate in some form in the churches in the Communion. We hold to the priesthood of all believers, and a presbytery of the clergy. The clergy takes a leadership role in the liturgical, sacramental and teaching ministries of the Communion. The Communion clergy are called chiefly to equip and lead in the Church, that Church which is the royal and priestly company that offers to God sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving through stewardship of time, energy, money, and spiritual gifts. Worship is so intrinsically bound to the role of the Communion’s clergy that if it does not flow into or out of the altar, it is not an essential element of ordained ministry. Only elders can celebrate Holy Communion at the altar, and deacons can assist the elders and bishops at the altar. All clergy can baptize, but lay persons can baptize with the permission of the local pastor or bishop. Deacons serve as ministers of the service and the word.

Elders serve as minister of word and the altar, or sacraments. Any ordained clergy can solemnize marriages. Marriage for the Apostolic Communion of Churches consists of one biological man and one biological woman.

Worship is the heartbeat of the Apostolic Communion of Churches as it blends together “treasures old and new”, as stated in Matthew 13:52, through a “convergence” of the three main streams of the Christian Church, as practiced in the early Church. As a starting point, the Communion roots itself in the Wesleyan-Holiness-Pentecostal tradition of the early 1700s-1900s. The Communion finds its Reformed Evangelicalism rooted in the Reformed understanding of the Gospel based on the teachings of those like John Knox of Scotland and John Calvin of Geneva, and other Reformed Reformers. The Communion’s sacramental understanding is a blend of the Anglican and pre-schism Church, and the first four ecumenical councils as far as they are agreeable with Holy Scripture and the testimony of the Ancient Church Fathers. The last three of the seven ancient ecumenical councils, the Communion accepts their Christological definitions. This rich tradition allows for a simple order of service as well as worship resplendent with pageantry, processions, incense, and chant. Two vital keys to worship in the Communion are that local congregations be open to the Holy Spirit’s activity and that they follow the “shape of the liturgy” that has been received from both the Holy Scriptures and the testimony of the ancient apostolic and post-apostolic Church.

A distinguishing mark of the Apostolic Communion is its openness to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given latitude to “have His way” in worship among the congregation. Worship is a blend of liturgy and free-church style, typically known as “broad church” among Anglicans and others. Clergy and laity should expect and anticipate the Holy Spirit to manifest His presence to His people through the biblical gifts and ministries. The guiding principles of the Communion are the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:40, that all things are done decently and in order.

The Communion’s liturgy is grounded in the worship of the Hebrew synagogue and the Temple combined with the eucharistic service of the early Christians. The Communion expects that churches will sing the great hymns of the Church in addition to the praise songs and choruses.

Scripture will be read in the hearing of all, and Holy Communion will be celebrated frequently and during the Holy Days.

The Communion calls upon and seeks other like-minded clergy, churches, and ministries to apply for communion affiliation and membership. Any clergy, churches, and ministries desiring to affiliate with the Communion shall fulfill the requirements for membership as established by the Apostolic Council and House of Bishops, and administered by the Archbishop and the Apostolic Council on the national and international level, and by the diocesan and the diocesan presbyterial council on the diocese level.

Each applicant for membership shall submit an application along with an application fee in United States dollars to the Archbishop's Office if applying on the national or international level, and if applying on the diocese level to the Office of the Diocesan Bishop. Once they have been vetted, had background checks, interviews and signed the covenant they shall be approved by the diocesan bishop or Archbishop, and shall be received into the Communion by being incardinated within a diocese.

No one can affiliate with the Apostolic Communion without being incardinated into one of its dioceses. If there is no diocese in that area, they will be either assigned to the headquarter diocese or a diocese that is close to them. The Archbishop at their discretion may consider erecting a new diocese in that place and appoint an interim diocesan until one can be raised up for that new diocese. Only the Archbishop with the confirmation of the House of Bishops can erect or suppress a diocese or merge a diocese.

The annual credential fee shall be assessed to all clergy, churches, para-church ministries and dioceses to be submitted along with an Annual Ministerial Report. The fee shall be established by the Office of the Archbishop with the approval of the Apostolic Council and payable to the Office of the Archbishop.

Members of the Communion, including applicants, must believe in the lordship of Jesus Christ and subscribe to the Mission Statement and Statement of Faith of the Communion; adhere to the ministry's commitment and operational guidelines in the membership packet; seek to empower the people of God in every area of their lives; be a cleric, a church or a ministry where the sacramental, reformed, evangelical and pentecostal expressions of the Church converge to form one mighty river; believe a Reformed understanding of salvation that is by grace through faith apart from any works—salvation, in the end, is a Gift of God, that we are elected by God to such a

Great Salvation; agree to be episcopally governed and respect the ministry of bishops and apostles in the Lord's Church; agree not to fight over non-essentials of the faith and allow for charity among the same; support the work of the diocese and the Communion with one's time, talents and resources for the furthering of the Kingdom of God; and unless physically unable by death or sickness, attend and register for the Annual COAAB Congress in Atlanta, Georgia for continuing education, worship, fellowship, training, inspiration and etc., and attend the Leadership Summit for the Communion as one is able. The House of Bishops will meet during this time.

The strength of the Communion will be based on the commitment of each bishop, apostle, clergy, church, ministry and diocese to support the vision and ministry through prayer, attendance at conferences, and fellowshiping with other members of the Communion and the voluntary monthly financial support (with the amount determined by member and bishop; it shall be called a communion tithe whether it is a tenth or not)—clergy to their diocesan bishops, and diocese and bishops and state “overseers” or Apostolic Administrators to the Archbishop.

The following shall be the benefits of affiliation with the Communion:

A) training, licensing, and ordination of ministers and church leaders, and recognition of their gifts and ministries; this will be done through the issuing of a minister's license or the imposition of hands in the rite of ordination for the candidate for ordained ministry; certificates may also be issued for church workers; each licensed or ordained minister shall be issued a fellowship card that shall be proof of fellowship and good standing with the Communion annually, upon the receipt of the Annual Ministerial Report and donation towards the work of the ministry of the Communion;

B) periodic communication from the Communion and bishops via emails, newsletters, teaching/position papers, audio tapes, CDs, DVDs, VHS/video tapes and/or telephone communications;

C) e-mail ministry, as each affiliate that has access to e-mail has the opportunity to correspond with the Communion and the diocesan bishops, who are available to pray with, counsel, encourage and teach affiliates as their needs arise, with the addition of conference call lines, Skype calls, and Facebook Messenger calls as well for example;

D) prayers from the administration for the specific requests one receives by regular mail as well as by e-mail;

E) opportunities for fellowship-conferences and seminars which shall be offered in the United States of America and in other countries for the benefits of members, affiliates, friends and partners of the Communion;

F) the ability to actively engage in missions and church planting efforts, both nationally and internationally;

G) opportunities for participation in ongoing short-term missionary outreaches and crusades;

H) community and economic development projects;

I) coaching and materials that will help clergy grow and develop their congregations, dioceses, and para-church ministries, in addition to accountability being provided to all members;

J) and such other programs that shall be initiated by the Communion and the diocese to undergird the ministry of the members of the Communion.

All assets, of every kind and nature, held by the Communion are, and shall be, irrevocably dedicated to and inured to the benefit of the charitable, educational, and religious purposes of the Communion, and used according to the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3), and no part thereof shall inure to the private benefit of any individual or be used for any impermissible purpose. Each gift or contribution received by the Communion shall be deemed restricted and designated by the donor to advance charitable, educational, and religious purposes of the Communion.

In the event of dissolution or termination of the Communion, the Communion's property in the United States of America shall become the property of Christian Life Cathedral, or property abroad shall be distributed as directed by the Apostolic Council.

Amendments

The Charter may be amended by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the Apostolic Council at a duly called meeting, or at a meeting called for that

purpose by the House of Bishops. No amendments shall be inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of Christian Life Cathedral.

All such amendments shall be submitted to the Executive Board of Christian Life Cathedral Ministries, Inc. who shall have the power to accept, modify, alter or reject such amendments.

First executed on the 16th day of January, in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Five at Christian Life Ministries International, Inc., Albany, State of Georgia, in the United States of America, signed by the Pastor/Bishop of CLMI and Secretary of the Executive Board.

Revised and executed on the 31st Day of December 2011. This revision revamps the former network and establishes it now as Apostolic Communion of Churches. The Communion shall obtain its own incorporation subject to the parameters of this charter as now enforced.

Further revised in September 2015 to replace “Bishop of CLMI” and “Senior Bishop” with Archbishop-Metropolitan per the motion by Bishop Steven D. Williams at the 2015 COAAB Congress and the second and unanimous vote by all bishops present.

Revised and executed in 2019 to correct grammatical and punctuation errors and restructure the contents of the Charter in a feasible manner to be read and studied upon.

++ *Thomas F Henry Jr* (ed)

Bishop of Atlanta and Albany (Georgia)

Considerations

Marriage for the Apostolic Communion of Churches consists of one biological man and one biological woman, according to Genesis 1 and 2. It is a divine ordinance and sacrament. No clergy within the Communion shall officiate any same-sex marriage, unions, or blessings.

The Apostolic Communion of Churches leaves up to the diocese and their bishop, whether or not women will be ordained as elders/priests/presbyters in that diocese.

No bishop within the Apostolic Communion shall pressure or condemn their brothers and sisters in Christ because they do not ordain women to the presbyterate in their diocese.

The diaconate, however, is open to both male and female clergy in all dioceses of the Apostolic Communion of Churches.

The Communion does have women clergy and they are expected to be treated and respected whether or not one agrees with women as elders or not. They shall be acknowledged by their titles and respected out of charity.

Only the Archbishop of the Communion can authorize the consecration of bishops and apostles. No bishop in the Apostolic Communion as an individual diocesan can.

They may assist at a consecration with the permission of the Archbishop.

The reason being that the Communion protects its Holy Orders and will only be accountable for those who are submitted to the Archbishop and House of Bishops of the Communion.

Anyone consecrating bishops without the express permission of the Archbishop can be suspended and/or lose their episcopal ministry in the Apostolic Communion of Churches.

The 4th canon of the Council of Nicaea says the ordination of a bishop in the presence of at least three provincial bishops and confirmation by the metropolitan bishop establishes a bishop as a legitimate bishop; herein lies the text:

“It is by all means proper that a bishop should be appointed by all the bishops in the province; but should this be difficult, either on account of urgent necessity or because of distance, three at least should meet together, and the suffrages of the absent [bishops] also being given and communicated in writing, then the ordination should take place. But in every province, the ratification of what is done should be left to the Metropolitan.”

This restriction applies to apostles as well. The Archbishop may extend the privilege of the consecrating as a chief consecrator to another bishop in the Communion when it comes to consecrating new bishops. All bishops can ordain elders/priests/presbyters and deacons as needed for their diocese.

At the discretion of the Archbishop, instead of erecting a diocese as a geographical diocese, they may erect a diocese as an affinity-based diocese. Those kinds of dioceses shall be few in number and shall be only formed out of necessity as much as possible, such as a Diocese of the Armed Services-ACC.

All clergy have a right to be tried by a jury of their peers and all have the right of final recur to the Office of the Archbishop as a final court of appeal. Only the Archbishop can overturn a verdict by the House of Bishops against a cleric of the Communion.

No cleric shall be suspended without a fair trial unless that cleric has openly violated any disciplinary matters that they have agreed to or have committed heresy or need to be removed for the good of the Communion.

All diocesan bishops before excommunicating a clergy person should present such to the House of Bishops for review. When the House of Bishops is not in session, then to the senior apostolic leadership (Archbishop and the Episcopal Vicars) of the Communion for review. If approved, then the person stands excommunicated if the evidence calls for such actions. Otherwise, the person can be defrocked and dismissed without the severe act of excommunication.

It is assumed healing and restoration of fellowship are the primary goal of all acts of discipline. No discipline shall be meted out as retribution because one has been offended by the actions of the clergy. The Office of the Archbishop shall always be consulted. If they cannot be contacted, one of the vicars will be contacted and review the situation, bringing a report to the Archbishop who will take action on the matter for the good of the Communion.

Only the Archbishop or the House of Bishops can excommunicate or approve the excommunication of any clergy of the Communion. The object of this is forgiveness, healing, and restoration where it is possible according to the Holy Scriptures in Matthew 15 and Hebrews 12.

The Archbishop and House of Bishops shall establish courts of appeal for presbyters to hear cases against elders and deacons. The House of Bishops may hear appeals from the lower courts. The decision of the House shall stand unless amended or rescinded by the Archbishop of the Apostolic Communion.

No persons shall serve as clergy among the Apostolic Communion of Churches who are guilty of felony crimes involving rape or child endangerment or child molestation. Such crimes being found guilty thereof will automatically trigger suspension of orders and a review of the orders by the Archbishop's Office, and they shall report the actions they have taken to the House of Bishops concerning the Holy Orders of the guilty cleric.

All clergymen and clergywomen are required to attend the Annual Congress in Metro Atlanta to satisfy the continuing education requirements of the Communion, and as much as they are able to attend the Leadership Summit. All clergy not attending these conferences must have a minimum of 21 continuing education credits in various disciplines that will be published each year by the Archbishop of the Communion. These would include Homiletics, Hermeneutics, Episcopacy, and other disciplines.

The Archbishop shall be due respect in their office in the Communion. They shall have the honor of place in the processions whether or not they are preaching or presiding over the service.

The seat they take in any church in the Communion becomes a temporary cathedra and should be respected as the same.

The Archbishop should be honored with a love gift (offering) for their birthday as the saints are able, as well as a special love offering during the Annual Congress and the Leadership Summit.

The Archbishop reserves the right to delegate authority in certain matters to their vicars. The Archbishop remains the court of final appeal and reserves the right in delegated matters to still issue a decision for the good of the Communion. Their decisions shall be final.
