

**ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF
WEBSTER, TEXAS**

**PARISH
BY - LAWS**



PARISH BY-LAWS
OF SAINT JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF WEBSTER, TEXAS
 (WITH AMENDMENT DATES)

ARTICLE I
NAME

Section 1: The name of the corporation shall be The Bay Area Orthodox Christian Community (BAOCC), Webster, Texas, a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Texas. The name of the church of the BAOCC shall be Saint John the Theologian Greek Orthodox Church, under the auspices of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Denver of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America.

ARTICLE II
PURPOSES

Section 1: The purposes of this corporation, hereinafter referred to as "Parish," are as follows:

1. To maintain, conduct and operate a church in conformity with the doctrine, canons, worship, discipline, usages and customs of the Greek Orthodox Church, herein after referred to as "the Church," as well as the regulations and guidelines of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America.
2. To establish, maintain, operate, and conduct schools for education in the Orthodox Faith and in the Greek language.
3. To carry on, promote, and sponsor charitable and philanthropic work, events, activities, and causes.

ARTICLE III
MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Any person, eighteen years of age or over, who was Baptized according to the rites of the Church, or was received into the Church through Chrismation, who lives according to the faith and canons of the Church, who has met his or her stewardship obligation (part of which is to meet his or her stewardship obligation to the Parish) and abides by the regulations of the Uniform Parish Regulations (UPR) of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and the By-Laws of the Parish, is a member in good standing of the Parish, except that a person under twenty-one shall not serve on the Parish Council when such service is contrary to local law.

ARTICLE IV
VOTING RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

Section 1: A new member shall be entitled to vote at any meeting of the Parish or at the Parish Council and Board of Auditors Election provided that said new member has fulfilled

the Parish stewardship financial obligation at least three months prior to said meeting or election.

Section 2: Voting rights of members who have fulfilled the Parish obligation for the immediate preceding calendar year shall not be terminated during the "*grace period*," same being the first four months of the current calendar year.

Section 3: The Parish stewardship obligation shall be on a calendar year basis and is hereby defined as a communicant's submitted statement committing oneself faithfully to the worship and sacramental life of the Church, and financially to this Parish.

ARTICLE V PARISH COUNCIL

Section 1: Except as herein otherwise specifically provided, the affairs of the Parish shall be managed by an elected Parish Council. The number of Council member of the Parish shall be nine (9). The Priest shall be a member of the Council, ex-officio, but not vote. Three (3) Council members shall be elected at annual elections as provided herein and shall each serve for a three (3) year term or until their successors are elected and qualified. Each member's term shall commence on the date he or she qualifies. *1

Section 2: It shall be the duty of the Parish Council to conduct those secular affairs of the Parish as specified herein in furtherance of the aims and purposes of the Church and in accordance with the Parish By-Laws and the constitution, canons, discipline, and regulations of the Archdiocese.

Section 3: Annually, at its first meeting following the qualifying of the newly-elected Members, the Council shall elect from its number the following officers by secret ballot: the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. In the event vacancies occur in the offices of the Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer, the Council shall immediately elect a replacement to serve for the remainder of the term of office.

Section 4: The Parish Council shall hold a regular meeting at least once each month and shall hold special meetings whenever the Priest, President, or four (4) members of the Council deem it necessary. Notification of a special meeting shall be given by the Council Secretary or by any person requested to do so by the Priest, the President, or the four (4) members calling the special meeting. Seven (7) members present at a meeting of the Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 5: It shall refer all spiritual questions or matters pertaining to the clergy to the Bishop of the Diocese.

Section 6: The Parish Council shall have full authority to appoint and dismiss lay personnel of the Parish.

Section 7: It shall maintain in a conspicuous place in the Church a current list of paid members, same to be revised quarterly during the calendar year.

Section 8: It shall have the power to lease, purchase, sell, and mortgage Parish real property, provided that the voting members of the Parish present at a special or general meeting approve the contemplated lease, purchase, sale, or mortgage of the Parish real property by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members present and provided that the

voting members of the Parish have been given at least ten (10) days written notice prior to the date upon which such meeting is to be held. Such decisions must be ratified by the Bishop of the Diocese.

- Section 9:** It shall submit to the Archdiocese a financial statement audited and approved by the council.
- Section 10:** It shall have exclusive power to collect the revenues of the Church and pay expenses against receipts for same. All expenses, including salaries of the employees of the Parish, shall be - paid by check.
- Section 11:** It shall cooperate and assist the Priest in maintaining the supplies necessary for Church services.
- Section 12:** During each year, a budget for the following year shall be presented to the members at a special or general meeting for their approval. A simple majority vote of the voting members present approves the budget
- Section 13:** The annual budget shall include a contingency fund, not to exceed 7% of the total budget for the year, to cover any unanticipated emergency expenditures. Any unbudgeted emergency expenditure, up to 40% of the total contingency fund, may be funded by the Council from this contingency fund without further Parish approval. The total contingency fund for the year may not be exceeded in any event, and any unbudgeted expenditure exceeding 40% of the total contingency fund must be approved by a majority vote of the voting members of the Parish present at a general or special meeting, provided that the voting members of the Parish have been given at least ten (10) days written notice prior to the date upon which such meeting is to be held. Written notice can be either by United States Postal Service, church bulletin, or by e-mail. *2
- Section 14:** The Council Members shall regularly attend Church services, and partake of the Holy Sacraments, thereby setting the example of regular fulfillment of religious duties. Council member shall be especially mindful of the assigned duty roster and shall report as assigned at least 20 minutes prior to the start of services.
- Section 15:** It shall turn over to the, succeeding Council everything pertaining to the Parish against receipt for same by January 20 of the new calendar year.
- Section 16:** A semi-annual inspection of the Church premises shall be made by the entire Parish Council. This inspection shall be documented, signed by the Council officers and maintained in Church official files.
- Section 17:** A document setting forth the physical inventory of all Parish property shall be maintained at all times. In addition, a list of all official documents, including insurance policies, shall be maintained. Originals of all official Parish documents shall be stored in a bank safety deposit box for safekeeping.
- Section 18:** Council Members, including their immediate families, shall refrain from bidding for or accepting business deals or paving jobs from the Parish while in office, or in any way involves themselves in conflict of interest situations.

ARTICLE VI

BOARD OF AUDITORS

- Section 1:** The Board of Auditors shall consist of three (3) members. One (1) Auditor shall be

elected at annual elections as provided herein and each shall serve for a three (3) year term or until such Auditor's successor is elected and qualified. The Board of Auditors shall have the following powers and duties:-

1. It shall audit semi-annually and annually the accounting records of the Parish, prepare a report of such audit, and present same at a meeting of the members of the Parish.
2. It shall have access to the Parish records at all times. However, the Board of
3. Auditors are not empowered to remove the Parish records from the business office.
4. After the appropriate members of the Council prepare the annual reports of the
5. revenues and expenditures of the Parish, the Board of Auditors shall audit and approve the report prior to submission to the members of the Parish on a semi-annual basis and provide an annual report at the end of each calendar year.
6. A physical count of all Church property shall be done during the last two weeks of December each year. In addition, an inventory of all documents and insurance policies shall be checked.

Section 2: Documents to be provided to the Board of Auditors:

1. Detailed budget for the audit year.
2. Accounts of all revenues-including donations made to the Priest for the Parish, etc.
3. Accounts of payments of all expenses (check stubs and canceled checks, plus bills for expenses).
4. Copies of all official Parish documents (insurance, mortgage, title, etc.).
5. Current inventory reports.

ARTICLE VII

MEETINGS OF THE PARISH MEMBERS

Section 1: Regular meetings of the members of the Parish shall be held twice each year. One such meeting to be known as the **Spring meeting** shall be held during the month of March of each year and the other such meeting to be known as the **Fall meeting** shall be held during the month of November of each year. The exact date of such meetings shall be designated by the Parish Council.

Section 2: Special meetings shall be called whenever deemed necessary by the Priest, the Parish Council, or by written petition of ten percent (10%) of the voting members of the Parish, or by the President. Written notices shall be sent out by the President to members in good standing at least ten (10) days prior to all general meetings of the members. Meetings of the members shall open with a prayer and proceed as follows:

1. The attendance register shall be signed by all those attending the meeting after their identity and qualifications have been verified.
2. The Secretary shall count the list of names of those who have signed the Attendances register in order to determine the number of votes necessary to constitute a majority by which resolutions shall be legally adopted. The presence of at least thirty (30) Parish members in good standing shall be

required to form a quorum for the transaction of business. If a decision is made regarding Parish property, two-thirds (2/3) of those present must approve.

3. A Chairperson shall be elected who will preside over the meetings.
4. The Secretary shall read the Minutes of the previous meetings of the members which shall be approved as read or corrected and approved.
5. The Secretary shall keep a permanent record of the Minutes of the proceedings which shall be signed by the Priest, Chairperson of the meeting, and the Secretary.
6. Treasurer's report will be presented.
7. Committee reports will be read.
8. All old business left pending from the previous meeting shall be considered and disposed of.
9. When applicable, the lay representative) shall be elected to attend the Biennial Ecclesiastical Congress and the issuance of the proper credentials shall be authorized.
10. When applicable, the budget, as submitted by the Parish Council, shall be discussed and either adopted or modified and adopted.
11. All other new business shall be in order.
12. Announcements and closing prayer.
13. Adjournment of meeting.

ARTICLE VIII **ELECTIONS**

A. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- Section 1:*** The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three (3) members of the Parish to be appointed by the President and confirmed by the Parish Council.
- Section 2:*** A candidate for the Parish Council must be a member in good standing of the Parish for at least one year immediately preceding the date of the election and who lives his or her life and activities in accordance with the faith and canons of the Church.
- Section 3:*** It shall be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to seek out and secure qualified candidates for the annual election to the Parish Council and the Board of Auditors.
- Section 4:*** The members of the Nominating Committee shall be appointed prior to July of each year and shall serve until the adjournment of the Fall meeting of the members.
- Section 5:*** The Committee shall canvass the members of the Parish a sufficient number of times so as to assure that there will be at least twice as many candidates for office as the positions to be filled, if possible.
- Section 6:*** When the names of all persons desiring to be candidates have been obtained, the Committee shall then submit in nomination all the names received in alphabetical order during the Fall meeting of the members.
- Section 7:*** Members of the Nominating Committee shall be eligible as candidates for any elective office.

Section 8: The Nominating Committee shall be discharged of its duties at the conclusion of the Fall meeting of members.

B. BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Section 1: The Board of Elections shall be composed of three (3) members to be elected during the Fall meeting of the members whose responsibility shall be to conduct and supervise the annual election.

Section 2: In cooperation with the Priest and the Parish Council, the Board of Elections shall check and verify the list of members eligible to vote at the election.

Section 3: Members of the Board of Elections shall not be eligible as candidates for any elective office.

Section 4: The Board of Elections shall prevent campaigning and loitering within the voting room.

C. ANNUAL ELECTION

Section 1: The Annual Election for members of the Parish Council and to the Board of Auditors shall be held no earlier than the first Sunday in November, and no later than the second Sunday in December each year. *2

Section 2: Members who have been nominated as candidates for any elective office must have been a member of the Parish in good standing for not less than one full year prior to election, and must have fully satisfied their Parish stewardship financial obligation for the current year.

* Also, the Priest will review and verify the list of candidates, certifying that they live their life in accordance with the faith and the canons of the Church.

Section 3: No member shall serve on the Parish Council or the Board of Auditors for more than two (2) consecutive elected terms.

Section 4: Candidates for election to the Board of Auditors shall have a working knowledge of the English language and shall be conversant with general accounting principles and procedures.

Section 5: Nominations of candidates for the Parish Council and Board of Auditors shall be held during the Fall meeting of the members, held during the month of November at which time the Nominating Committee will submit the names of those members who, prior to said meeting, submitted their names to the Committee as candidates for elective office. Members may also be nominated by another member during the meeting provided the member nominated has expressed a willingness to be a candidate. All candidates for election to the Parish Council "must attend a seminar conducted by the Priest prior to the election as prescribed in the UPR.

Section 6: After all nominations have been submitted, if it becomes apparent that there are not at least twice as many candidates as there are officers to be filled, the members present at the meeting may either extend the period for making nominations until there are sufficient candidates for nomination or may close nominations regardless of the number of names submitted in nomination. If the membership extends the period for making nominations then the term of the Nominating Committee will also be extended

until such time as there are sufficient candidates for election to office. The Parish Council, under these conditions, is hereby authorized to designate, if necessary, an election date other than that specified herein.

Section 7: Positions of candidates' names on the ballot shall be determined by lot. The Board of Elections shall conduct the drawing to determine the position on the ballot immediately following the adjournment of the Fall meeting or as soon thereafter as possible if the period of nominations has been extended by the members as provided in Section 6 above.

Section 8: The final list of candidates shall be posted in a conspicuous place in the Narthex of the Church not less than seven (7) days prior to the annual election. In addition, a special written notice stating the time and place of the election and including a copy of the final list of candidates shall be mailed so as to be received by all the membership entitled to vote not less than one (1) week prior to the election.

Section 9: Elections shall be by secret ballot and shall be held at a place on the Parish premises previously designated by the Board of Elections. The polls shall be open from the end of the Divine Liturgy until 4:00pm and the ballots shall be deposited in a sealed box. All ballots shall be counted after the closing of the polls.

Section 10: The election results shall be entered in the official record of the Parish. The number of votes cast for each candidate shall be shown and the candidates receiving the greatest number of votes shall be declared elected for the ensuing term. Within five (5) days the election results shall be forwarded by the Priest to the Diocese for ratification and confirmation.

Section 11: The newly elected Council Members shall take the oath of office administered to them by the Priest before the congregation at an installation ceremony observed after services on the Sunday following receipt of the Diocese ratification of the election. No newly elected Council Member shall assume his duties until duly sworn.

Section 12: Any member in good standing of the Parish questioning the validity of any election may, within five (5) days after such election, lodge a written protest with the Bishop through the Parish Priest. Such protest shall be signed by the questioning member and at least four (4) other Parish members. The decision of the Bishop thereon shall be final.

Section 13: No salaried employee of the Parish may serve at the same time as a member of the Parish Council, Board of Auditors, or Board of Elections.

Section 14: There shall be no voting by proxy.

Section 15: There shall be no absentee voting.

ARTICLE IX

VACANCIES ON THE PARISH COUNCIL AND BOARD OF AUDITORS

Section 1: A member of the Parish Council or the Board of Auditors shall be relieved of his or her duties in the following instances:

1. Where it has been found that a member of the Parish Council or the Board of Auditors is not, or has ceased to be, attached or devoted to the doctrines,

constitutions, canons, administrative rulings, discipline, worship, ritual customs and practices, regulations and encyclicals of the Archdiocese, or that he or she does not recognize the duly constituted Ecclesiastical authorities or seeks to defame them.

2. Where such member has been excommunicated, that is to say, separated from the Body of the Church, for any serious offense punishable under canon law.

Section 2: Pursuant to a resolution of the Parish Council to such effect, a member of the aforesaid Council shall be relieved of his or her duties in the following instances:

1. Where he or she has been absent from three (3) consecutive Council meetings, whether special or scheduled, except where it is necessary for him or her to absent himself or herself for more than one (1) month, but not exceeding three (3) months, and has obtained a leave of absence from the Council. If, in the judgment of the other members of the Council, its interests are not prejudiced by a single absence of such duration, or if they agree to perform his or her duties for him or her while he or she is away, permission for such absence shall be granted. A Council member who absents himself or herself without consent from the Council from three (3) consecutive meetings, or who violates his or her leave of absence without sufficient cause, shall be replaced by a new Council member.
2. Where he or she unjustifiably fails to attend Church services on four (4) consecutive Sundays.
3. Where a member of the Council resigns or dies.

Section 3: Vacancies on the Parish Council or Board of Auditors, howsoever they may have occurred, shall be filled from the list of candidates who received the next largest number of votes in the previous election, or in the absence of such candidates, by election at a special meeting of the voting members of the Parish. Any person who feels he or she has been unjustifiably removed from office may appeal to the Diocese.

ARTICLE X

POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT

Section 1: To call meetings of the Parish Council and meetings of the members of the Parish.

Section 2: To preside over meetings of the Parish Council.

Section 3: To present the agenda to Council meetings, general meetings, and special meetings called by the Parish Council.

Section 4: To sign the Minutes of the proceedings and various incoming and outgoing documents together with the Parish Priest and the Secretary of the Council.

Section 5: To sign checks jointly with the Treasurer, Vice President, or Secretary of the Parish Council.

Section 6: To supervise the administrative functions of the Parish including, but not limited to, the books and records of the Parish and office personnel.

Section 7: To exercise the authority vested in him or her as President under the law, the regulations and the canons.

Section 8: To appoint committees for the purpose of carrying out such duties as he or she may assign to them. The chairpersons of such committees must be confirmed by the Parish Council.

ARTICLE XI

POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Section 1: The Vice President shall assume and perform the duties of the President during the absence or disability of the President. In the event of the disqualification, resignation, removal from office, or death of the President, the Vice President shall become President for the unexpired term of the President, with all powers and authority vested in the President.

ARTICLE XII

POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY

Section 1: To attend all meetings of the Parish Council and meetings of the members of the Parish and to keep the Minutes thereof, in a permanent record book.

Section 2: To keep the Parish records, which shall be kept in a safe place in the Parish Church office.

Section 3: To affix his or her signature to all incoming and outgoing Parish documents which shall also be signed by the President and the Parish Priest.

Section 4: To turn everything over to his or her successor in good order against receipt for same.

Section 5: The Secretary shall be custodian of the Parish Seal. The Parish Seal shall be affixed to official Parish documents only. A second Parish Seal shall be in the possession and use of the Parish Priest.

ARTICLE XIII

POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE TREASURER

Section 1: To collect Parish funds against receipt and to deposit same in the name of the Parish with depositories selected by the Parish Council.

Section 2: To keep a record of the Parish revenues and expenditures.

Section 3: To prepare and issue monthly, quarterly, and annually the Parish financial reports.

Section 4: To oversee the Parish bookkeeping system and to see that it meets standards established by the Parish Council.

Section 5: To assist the Board of Auditors in their annual review of the Parish financial reports.

Section 6: To maintain a petty cash fund of \$100.00 and all expenditures wherefrom are to be receipted.

Section 7: To sign checks jointly with the President, Vice President, or Secretary of the Council.

Section 8: To prepare and maintain with the cooperation of the Secretary a list of all members in good standing entitled to vote in elections.

Section 9: To obtain surety bonds for all persons handling Parish funds, the premiums of such bonds to be paid out of the Parish treasury.

Section 10: The Treasurer must be bonded.

Section 11: To turn over everything appertaining to his office to his successor in good order and against receipt thereof.

ARTICLE XIV

PARISH FINANCES AND ACCOUNTING

Section 1: The fiscal year shall commence on the first day of January and shall end on the thirty- first day of December.

Section 2: An annual financial report of the revenues and expenditures of the Parish shall be Developed by the Treasurer and submitted to the Parish Council for approval and then presented at the first meeting of the year of the Parish membership.

Section 3: The Parish is financed through the contributions of its members. The minimum financial obligation of the members shall be established by the membership to meet the Parish's needs.

Section 4: The system of accounting procedures and internal control of this Parish shall conform to generally accepted accounting procedures as approved by the Parish Council.

Section 5: The Parish Council shall annually prepare a budget for the forthcoming year and present it at the Fall meeting of the members for review and approval.

ARTICLE XV

PARISH SEAL

Section 1: The Parish shall have a seal bearing the name of the Parish in a form acceptable under the laws of the State of Texas. Said seal shall be kept in the Parish office in the custody of the Secretary. A second seal shall be in the custody of the Parish Priest.

ARTICLE XVI

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1: On all matters of Parliamentary authority and procedure which is not otherwise expressly provided for in the State statutes, or in these By-Laws, Robert's Rules of Order shall govern.

ARTICLE XVII

AMENDMENTS TO PARISH BY-LAWS

Section 1: The Parish By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present at a general or special meeting of the members, provided that all the voting members of the Parish have been given at least ten (10) days written notice prior to the date upon which a meeting called for the purpose of making amendments is held. The

proposed amendments) shall be included in the call of the meeting sent to the voting members of the Parish.

ARTICLE XVIII

DISSOLUTION OF THE PARISH

Section 1: When it is determined by the Parish Council that the Parish is incapable of supporting itself, a meeting of the members of the Parish shall be called and if three-fourths (3/4) of all the" members in good standing confirm such determination, the Archdiocese shall dissolve the Parish and dispose of its property by making it available to the nearest duly organized Parish for the benefit of the Greek Orthodox communicants in the area.

AMENDMENTS:

*1 amended and approved by His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah in May 2013

*2 amended and approved by His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah in July 2017