

CSC CONSTITUTION 2021-2030

Chicago Swahili Chapel
– Version 1 -
January 1 through - March 19, 2021

PREAMBLE

Since God's Word requires that a Christian Congregation do all things in a sincere and orderly manner, the pastor and members of Chicago Swahili Chapel, do pledge themselves consciously to fulfill the requirements of the following constitution.

Article 1 Name and Association

The name of this church shall be CHICAGO SWAHILI CHAPEL. We are an evangelical independent congregational member church.

Article 2 Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be to Glorify God through loving Him and loving others in the following ways: to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the ordinances of the church; to actively engage in Christian fellowship and to realize unity within this Church and the church universal; to render loving service toward mankind; to strive for righteousness, justice and peace; and to teach and learn the Word of God and the values and techniques for living a Christian life in the world.

Article 3 Corporate Existence and Powers

A. The corporate existence of the church began in 2016 in Schaumburg upon its founding (based upon common agreement of the elders that saw it fit to form an accountable and bible-based congregation and is recognized as a non-profit charitable organization by the State of Illinois and will continue perpetually thereafter unless dissolved by the Congregation and the elders.

B. No part of the net earnings will be to the benefit of any director, elder or officer of the church or any private individual (except that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered to or for the church affecting one or more of its purposes).

D. No officer/elder of the church or any private individual will be entitled to share in the distribution of any church assets on dissolution of the church. In the case of dissolution, all the assets of the church shall be donated to another non-profit organization.

Article 4 Authority and Affiliation

A. Authority: The congregation, at its annual and special business meetings, is the legislative and governing body of this organization. The church shall hold one annual meeting every year.

B. Affiliation: This church will be not affiliated with any evangelical community of churches for the moment. This article may be revised in the future depending on the growth and the current leadership of the church. In case of any future alliances and affiliations, the principles adapted will be supported by the mission of the church and in all mutual efforts for the furtherance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Article 5 Statement of Faith

The Statement of Faith of the Chicago Swahili Chapel shall read as follows:

CSC Statement of Faith

1. *God*

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

2. *The Bible*

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

3. *The Human Condition*

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

4. *Jesus Christ*

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

5. *The Work of Christ*

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

6. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

7. The Church

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

8. Christian Living

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

9. Christ's Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

10. Response and Eternal Destiny

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

Article 6 Membership

Membership of this church will be composed of those individuals who, through saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been born again; who manifest the fruit of a true Christian life; who subscribe to the Statement of Faith; and who are willing to support the church by their prayers, contributions, tithe, service and attendance.

Article 7 Officers

A. The ministry and business functions of this corporation (Chicago Swahili Chapel) will be overseen by the pastor and a board of directors/elders. This board will be called the Board of Elders. The membership of this Board of Elders, their election and their term of office, is defined in the Bylaws of this church.

B. Other officers not serving as members of the Board of Elders (for example: The Treasurer) will be included in the church's list of officers and will be included in board meetings as may be required and deemed fitting. For the requirements by the State of Illinois for a non-profit corporation, officers will be defined in the Bylaws of this church, including their election and their term of office.

Article 8 Property

A. This church will have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Illinois and as is deemed necessary for the business of the church. This church will also have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed or otherwise. All purchases of real estate or major construction and building renovations or additions must be approved by seventy five percent (75%) majority vote of a quorum present at an annual or special business meeting of the church.

B. All debts for the corporation will be held in the name of the corporation. The personal and private property of the officers or members of this corporation will not be used in the payment of the corporate debt.

C. In case of a division of the church (from which we pray God, by His mercy, will preserve us) the property of the church will belong to those who abide by its Constitution and Bylaws. If the opposing groups or divisions cannot bring resolution to the divisive issue(s), the host church or another church that is evangelical and bible believing will act as arbitrator to make final determination which group retains the rights to the property of the church. The church property will stay with the church, and not be ceded to the Association without the specific decision of the church leadership and body. (SEE ARTICLE 9 in BYLAWS)

Article 9 Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution must be submitted to the members in writing and adopted as a preliminary step at a regular business meeting of the church at least one month prior to the annual meeting. They must be acted upon as previously adopted and without further amendment. At the annual meeting they can be acted upon for final adoption but must receive the affirmative vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of the membership present and voting.

By - Laws

The By-Laws of CHICAGO SWAHILI CHAPEL: An Independent Congregational Church

Article 1 Church Government

A. This church chooses to be congregational in its government.

Congregationalism is defined to mean:

1. That this local church has the right to determine its own mission and decisions under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the guidance of God's Word.

2. The highest authoritative body for this local church is the membership as they voice their decisions through the appropriate majority vote (as defined in these By-Laws).

3. The responsibility for church government belongs to the entire membership and each member is encouraged to participate in the decision-making process. Each member should participate with spiritual maturity and with a desire to build up the body of Christ.

B. Congregationalism is based upon the following concepts and Biblical precepts:

1. That ministry is the responsibility of all believers. While government is limited to the active members of the church, congregationalism invites all believers, because they have been gifted by the Holy Spirit, to participate in ministry. All believers who regularly participate in the life of this local church are encouraged to find a place of service and are welcomed as co-laborers for our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. That recognized spiritually gifted leaders are a part of God's plan for the local church. While the congregation determines the general direction of the local church and holds final authority, carrying out specific directions and ministries is delegated to specific officers and leaders in the church.

Authority is vested by the congregation in these individuals or groups to operate under the guidelines established by the congregation. Honor is shown to those serving in a specific leadership or ministry role by not unduly interfering in the fulfillment of their position. These servants also understand the responsibility and accountability that has been given to them and serve according to the mission and purpose of the church. Mutual submission, love and respect must govern all the structural relationships of authority within the church.

If there is a question about any decision or action of an individual or group, the congregation can request a review of the issue and may affirm or overrule the decisions at a duly called congregational meeting by vote.

3. That the church recognizes the need for interdependence with the churches and government structures of other evangelical churches but until the church grows and builds a network of partner churches, it shall stay independent. The authority of the congregation is not an excuse for isolation. Rather, it is an encouragement to mutually give and receive help for the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Article 2 Membership Procedures

A. Membership Defined.

Membership is granted to anyone who has given testimony to his/her faith in Jesus Christ and who desires to actively support the ministry of the Church.

This "active support" includes affirming the Chicago Swahili Chapel Statement of Faith; the mission, vision and values of Chicago Swahili Chapel and actively praying for, giving to and participating in the life of the church.

B. Application Procedures

1. Those professing faith in Jesus Christ and desiring membership will request a membership application and return the completed application to the pastor or an elder for consideration by the Board of Elders. The applicant must also complete a membership class.
2. An applicant will meet with the Board of Elders or their designated representative (such as the Pastor) to review the application form and give a verbal testimony of his/her faith in Jesus Christ.
3. After completion of the first two membership steps and approval by the elder board, the new members will be presented to the congregation in the bulletin during a Sunday morning service.
4. Believer's baptism is encouraged as an outward symbol of obedience to Jesus Christ. And this should have been discussed during the membership class.

C. Membership Privileges

1. A member who is 18 years of age or older has voting privileges at all congregational meetings.
2. A member who is 18 years of age or older may be elected to any office for which he/she meets the Biblical qualifications.

D. Withdrawing Membership, Transferring, and Termination Procedures

1. The Board of Elders will grant a letter of transfer upon receiving a written request from that member.
2. The Board of Elders will drop a person's name from the membership list upon receiving a written request from that member.
3. A person's membership may be terminated for discipline reasons according to Article 4 of these By-Laws.
4. A person whose membership has been terminated must complete the application procedures of Article 2, Section B for reinstatement.
5. A member who has not had contact with the church for one year may be moved to inactive status on the membership list by the Board of Elders. The member may continue in inactive status until the Board of Elders can determine if there is a clear break in membership or if the individual simply cannot attend services for an extended time. Those elderly members who may only experience church when there is a visit to their home or residence, shall remain members. The Board of Elders will make a final attempt to communicate with the member before any action is final.
6. The Board of Elders will communicate all membership activity defined above to the congregation as a primary item of business at the next congregational business meeting (in tandem with any affirmation votes on new members).
7. No present or former member has any right or claim to any church property.

Article 3 Leadership

A. Leadership Structures:

1. Church Officers

- a. The Church Officers will be Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. (to be discussed)
- b. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be voting members of the Elder Board. They must meet the qualifications of Elder as defined in Article 3, Section C of these By-Laws. They will also serve as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Elder Board.
- c. The Secretary and Treasurer need not be part of the Elder Board; however, they will be responsible to the Board of Elders and will meet with the Board of Elders at the Board's request (of course, members of the Elder Board may be elected to these offices of the church).

2. Board of Elders

- a. The Board of Elders will have direct responsibility and oversight for the spiritual health and vitality of the Church. Part of this spiritual oversight includes responsibility to the business operations and the forward direction of the church.
- b. The Board of Elders will meet at least monthly to organize and carry out these responsibilities.
- c. The Board of Elders will be composed of the Pastor and a minimum of two to no more than six other qualified men elected by the membership. The required qualifications are listed in Article 3, Section C of the By-Laws.
- d. Elders will serve three-year terms and not more than three consecutive terms.
- e. Election of Elders will be staggered so that there is a consistency of Elders and not all the Elders will end their terms at the same time. This means that occasionally an Elder will need to be elected for a one-year or two-year term, although they may be re-elected to serve up to two additional terms.
- f. A Nomination Team will prepare a list of men (initially two to six men and thereafter the number required to maintain an adequate number of Elders plus the Pastor) to serve as the Elders of the congregation. This list will be presented to the membership for individual affirmation at the Congregational Business Meeting or a special meeting announced for this purpose. A 75% majority vote is required for Elder affirmation.
- h. The Elders themselves will choose the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and an Elder Board Secretary (not the church Secretary) at their first meeting following the Annual Congregational Meeting. The Pastor cannot serve as the Chairman or Vice-Chairman in normal operation of the Board.
- i. The Chairman will work in cooperation with the Pastor to set the agendas and lead the Board of Elders meetings. He will also serve as Moderator of the Congregational Meetings and set the agenda (in agreement with the Board of Elders) for these meetings.
- j. The Vice-Chairman will assist the Chairman as needed and in the event that the Chairman is unable to complete his term, the Vice-Chairman will assume the role of Chairman and serve in that capacity until the new election of Chairman following the next Annual Congregational Meeting.
- k. The Secretary of the Board of Elders will be responsible to keep minutes of every meeting of the Board of Elders.

1. If at least two Elder positions become vacant, the nomination process will begin, and elections will be held at a specially called Congregational Meeting to complete the open terms.

3. Ministry Teams and Ministry Team Leaders

a. Ministry Teams will be created by the Board of Elders to develop and carry out specific ministries that fulfill the mission and vision of the church. Ministry teams are crucial to the effective service of the church and the equipping ministry of the church. They include teams such as a Missions/Evangelism Team, Worship Service Team, & Christian Education Team. New teams can be assembled to meet the needs of the church.

b. Each Ministry Team will continue their ministry existence until the Elder Board believes the Ministry Team should be discontinued.

c. The Ministry Teams are accountable to the Board of Elders and the Elders are to serve the ministry of these teams to the best of their abilities.

d. Once a Ministry Team is established, a leader will be chosen by the Board of Elders from the membership.

(1) These leaders are fulfilling the ministry role described as deacon or deaconess in I Timothy 3:8-13. They may be a man or woman and must meet the biblical qualifications of a deacon or deaconess.

(2) These leaders are accountable to the Board of Elders.

(3) Team leaders will be reviewed by the Board of Elders and served by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders will recommend, advise, and counsel the continued leadership by that individual.

B. Duties

1. Elders (Overseers as defined in I Timothy 3;1-7)

a. Oversee the ministry functions of the church.

b. Assist the Pastor in shepherding the congregation.

c. Process applications for membership and keep oversight of the membership role to be sure that it is kept up to date.

d. Lead the congregation, in cooperation with the leadership of the Pastor, by projecting an annual vision statement and working to achieve the goals and objectives of that vision and the overall mission of the church.

e. Serve the church by applying Biblical discipline in order to achieve Biblical restoration of an erring member in the spirit of Christian love.

f. Secure pulpit supply and be sure the worship services of the church are adequately led in the absence of the Pastor.

g. Assist the Pastor in leading the congregation to pray and care for one another, as well as developing a heart to reach outward with the message and ministry of Jesus Christ.

h. Develop the church's annual budget (in conjunction with finance officers) to be presented at the Annual Congregational Business Meeting.

i. Oversee the business functions of the church.

2. Chairman

- a. Conduct congregational and Board of Elders meetings in Christian dignity and order.
- b. Be a non-voting liaison to other boards, teams, and committees.
- c. Hold other leaders accountable for their responsibilities in cooperation with the Pastor.
- d. Arrange for periodic audits for all financial records.
- e. Provide proper communication and interaction with all the officers and Ministry Team Leaders of the church. This should be done in cooperation with the Pastor and other Elders.

3. Vice-Chairman

- a. Preside in the absence of the chairman.
- b. Assist the chairman as needed.

4. Board Secretary

- a. Keep the minutes of Congregational Business Meetings or arrange for it.
- b. Take minutes for the Elder board meetings, recording votes and details.
- c. The Board Secretary is a member of the Board of Elders and not the same as a church secretary. The Church Secretary shall be responsible for the official correspondence of the church, keep track of all important records of the church, and keep a current list of the membership in consultation with the Board of Elders.

5. Treasurer

- a. Count all monies received. At least one additional person who is trustworthy in finances will assist with counting for accurate records.
- b. Keep a record of all monies with proper identification in these records.
- c. Provide proper records to donors to meet the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service.
- d. Provide financial reports of income to the congregation for the Congregational Business Meetings and at other times when instructed by the Board of Elders.
- e. Disperse the funds as directed by the annual budget and the Board of Elders.
- f. Keep proper records and receipts for church expenditures.
- g. Provide proper records to the Internal Revenue Service (especially for hired employees of the church).
- h. Provide monthly financial reports of income to the Board of Elders (and as needed to other Ministry Teams).
- i. Provide monthly financial reports of disbursements to the Board of Elders.
- j. Provide financial reports of disbursements to the congregation for the Congregational Business Meetings or as instructed by the Board of Elders.

C. Elder's Roles and Responsibilities

1. Elders are to provide spiritual oversight and care for the people of the church. It is a responsibility they share with the pastor and staff. They are to be qualified to teach" give forth" the Scriptures and doctrine, but do not need to publicly teach. A higher standard of accountability is associated with the position of Elder because of this responsibility (1

Tim. 3:7). Elders will one day give an account before God for the spiritual oversight they have exercised (Heb. 13:17). Like the Deacons, they should be people of love and integrity because they represent Christ and his church.

The Elders will be godly men in accordance with the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. For example:

Servant Leading – The elders are to lead the church—in spiritual matters and oversee the pastors, deacons, administration, and ministries of the church. The elders are to serve the church and the members just as Christ served His disciples (John 13:1-20). This leadership is a gift from God and thus the elder must remain humble and teachable and willing to work with others. The Elder serves to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Shepherding – The elders seek to protect the flock. They will seek to protect the church from false teachings (Acts 20:28-30). They will remain in prayer for the congregation as well as individuals (James 5:14). They will correct as needed (1 Thessalonians 5:12).

Teaching – The elders will be solely responsible for the teaching in the worship service, adult education, Sunday School, and provide oversight to all teaching done in the name of the church. It is the expectation for the elder to lead Sunday School, Adult Education, and preach during the Sunday service if requested (1 Timothy 5:17).

Equipping – The elders will actively develop the gifts of the individual church members and provide training for ministry and small group leaders (2 Timothy 2:1-2). They will take an active part in discipling the congregation in conjunction with the Pastor.

Modeling – The elders shall model the Christian life by cultivating a dependent prayer life with Christ (James 5:14, Acts 6:6, 14:23, 20:36); maintaining personal Bible study (1 Timothy 4:6-7); opening his home in loving hospitality (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8); and by helping the weak according to their needs (Acts 20:35).

Roles of the Officers:

2. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will have the ability to lead, conduct, coordinate and delegate.

3. The Secretary will have an aptitude for keeping minutes, maintaining records and doing board correspondence.

4. The Financial Secretary and Treasurer will have the ability to confidentially manage finances.

5. The Ministry Team Leaders will be godly people in accordance with the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:8-14. They may be a man or woman and must show an aptitude for leading and organizing the specific area of ministry, as well as a passion for that ministry.

6. If an elected leader becomes unqualified, the Board of Elders will ask for that person's resignation. If that person does not resign, he/she will be suspended by the Board of Elders until that leader is permanently removed or restored by a simple majority (51%) vote of the members voting at a congregational meeting. Removal from leadership does not automatically revoke one's membership.

D. Deacon's roles and responsibilities

Deacons are leaders who assist in ministries of mercy, benevolence, physical needs of people (and spiritual needs), the building and grounds of the church, as well as carrying out the work and administration of the church. They are distinct from elders in that they do not have ruling authority and are not required to be qualified to teach. Serving as a deacon is a noble task, reflecting the ministry of Jesus as he washed his disciples' feet and pronounced blessing on those who follow his example of humble service to other believers. Those who serve well as deacons can be assured that they "will gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:13). As with Elders, it is important that they be people of love and integrity because they represent Christ and his church.

A. Qualifications

Each deacon shall meet the qualifications set forth in Acts 6:3 and I Tim. 3:8-12

B. Duties

Servant leading – the deacons are to lead the church in administrative matters of the church by working with the Elders in unity (Phil. 1:27-28). The deacons are to serve the church just as Christ served his disciples (John 13:1-20). This leadership is a gift from God and thus the deacon must remain humble and teachable and willing to work with others. The deacons serve to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).

Discerning – the deacons shall superintend the administrative matters of the church in working with the elders to the glory of God (Phil. 2:21) and in a peaceful manner (Phil. 4:9).

Modeling – the deacons shall model the Christian life by cultivating a dependent prayer life with Christ, maintaining personal Bible study, opening his or her home in loving hospitality, and helping the weak according to their needs (Phil. 4:5-9).

The Deacon Board shall:

1. Handle or oversee the Ministries of Mercy and benevolence in the church.
2. Exercise supervision over the daily administrative affairs and coordinate activities of the church.
3. Prepare a proposed annual church budget for the Elder Board's approval
4. Establish guidelines for the Financial Secretary and Treasurer.
5. Establish and administer a benevolence fund.
6. Assist the pastoral staff with physical preparations for communion services and baptismal services.

7. Supervise the purchase, repair, and maintenance of all church property; 9. Perform a physical inventory of church assets as needed.
10. Develop any long- and short-term plans for the church building and space needs of the church.
11. Perform all other duties deemed necessary by the Elder Board or the church.

Article 4 Discipline & Restoration

A. The purpose of discipline is restoration. Sometimes serious offenses bring shame and dishonor to the Body of Christ and hurtful to members. Discipline seeks to keep the integrity and purity of the Body of Jesus Christ; help the Body and an individual believer move towards righteousness and maturity in Jesus Christ; and to restore a person to faith and fellowship with other believers and Jesus Christ.

B. The Board of Elders will confront a person (or persons) who digresses from Scripture or the church's Constitution; or disrupts the fellowship of the church (including personality disputes) according to the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1-5.

C. A charge against any person will be given in writing with a personal signature and presented to the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders will investigate the matter and confer privately with the accused.

1. The Board of Elders may take appropriate action if they are satisfied the charges are true.

2. Should the Board of Elder's action be felt unfair, the accused may have the option of direct appeal to the congregation.

D. No member will be expelled until every effort has been made to reclaim him/her for Christ and the church in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17, II Thessalonians 3:13-15 and Galatians 6:1-2. If these efforts fail, that person will be expelled from the membership by a simple majority vote (51%) of the members voting at a congregational meeting.

E. Regular attenders of the church may also be asked to stay away from any or all gatherings of the church if the Board of Elders believes it is necessary for the health of the church and individuals in the church. However, serious and due diligence should be made by the Board of Elders to restore the person and allow them to participate in the gatherings of the church.

Article 5 Congregational Business Meetings

A. Congregational Business Meetings will be scheduled once a year in October on a date set by the Elder Board.

1. This yearly meeting will be the meeting where Elders and Officers are elected and the annual budget for the coming fiscal year is approved. The fiscal year is the calendar year.
2. The newly elected Elders and Officers will begin their terms on the following January first or as needed.
3. Annual reports for the current year will be presented from Elders, Officers and Ministry Teams. An annual statement from the Elders and Pastor will be presented to the congregation at this meeting.

B. Special Congregational Business Meetings will be called at the request of the Pastor, Chairman, the Board of Elders or when five eligible members representing different households submit a written request to the Board of Elders requesting a meeting.

1. The Special Congregational Business Meeting will be announced with its purpose(s) at two consecutive Sunday worship services or by written notice to the membership and then announced at one Sunday worship service.
2. Official actions of the Special Congregational Business Meeting will be limited to the stated purpose(s) and any action specifically allowed by these By-Laws at a duly called Congregational Business Meeting.

C. All Congregational Business Meetings will be conducted in a Christlike spirit and according to Scriptural principles. *Robert's Rules of Order* will be the standard for the parliamentary procedures at all Congregational Business Meetings, though wisdom and spiritual humility should govern all proceedings.

Article 6 Pastor, Pastoral Staff and Non-Pastoral Ministry Staff

A. Duties

1. The Pastor will perform all the Scriptural duties of the office under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These duties will include:
 - a. Preaching at the stated services of the church.
 - b. Visiting members of the congregation as needed (visiting should be the goal of all caring believers, modeling this by the elders, deacons, and other godly church members).
 - c. Administering the ordinances and/or oversee their proper administration.
 - d. Leading the congregation to care for the spiritual welfare of others (in cooperation with the Board of Elders).
 - e. Discipling, encouraging, and training the leadership.
 - f. Keeping the congregation focused on its mission as stated in the Constitution and project an annual vision statement (in cooperation with the Board of Elders) which fulfills that mission.
2. He (being an ex-official member) will **not be** a voting member of the Board of Elders (His role is to steer the church leadership in the right decision and to provide spiritual and leadership wisdom in the decision-making processes of the board) but will be an ex-officio member of all Ministry Teams, task forces or committees, though this does not require him to attend all church meetings.
3. He will not qualify for any other elected or appointed office (except he may serve as Secretary of the Board of Elders).

4. He will be accountable to the Board of Elders and the Board of Elders will seek to lovingly serve him in his role. Since the Pastor is an elder, there is to be brotherly love and caring submission in the interactions.
5. The sermons preached shall be the intellectual property of the pastor, but the pastor will not hold the church in contempt for using the sermons on the church website or on the social media platforms.

B. Qualifications

1. The qualifications for Pastor will be those found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, which are the same for elders and pastors.
2. He will exhibit the spiritual gift of the pastor/teacher (Ephesians 4:11-12).
3. He will hold to the Chicago Swahili Chapel Statement of Faith without mental reservation.
4. At the time of candidating, he should state in writing any differences of opinion he has with the Constitution and By-Laws.
5. He should be a graduate of a recognized and accredited theological institution and holding at least a Master's degree in Theology preferable a Ph.D.

C. Calling a Pastor

1. The Pastoral Search Team will be composed of five church members and the church Chairman will serve as an ex-officio member. The Team should have at least one Elder but not more than two Elders. The Board of Elders will openly seek nominations from the church membership to serve on this Team. The Board of Elders will present the proposed Team to the congregation for affirmation. The Board of Elders will select the Chairperson of the Pastoral Search Team.
2. Their duties will be (without unnecessary delay) to seek advice from the District Superintendent, investigate, interview and invite to candidate a man of good report who meets the qualifications stated in 6B above.
3. After the process of narrowing the potential candidates to one, the Pastoral Search Team will recommend this candidate to the Board of Elders. If the Board of Elders accepts the recommendation, then the Pastoral Search Team will introduce the candidate to the church, arrange a time to candidate and then give their recommendation to the congregation at a Congregational Business Meeting. At this time, a call to become the Pastor may be extended to the candidate by a 75% majority ballot vote of the members voting at that Congregational Meeting.
4. A candidate will be eliminated before another is invited to candidate.
5. A candidate will be expected to accept or reject a call within 2 weeks (and likely in several days to a week), though actual start-date might be at any specified time in the future.

6. Questions about job description, salary and other hiring or call issues will be determined by the Board of Elders.

D. Termination

1. The Pastor will serve until he resigns or is dismissed by the congregation. Thirty days will be considered proper notice from the Pastor or the Board of Elders, unless both parties mutually agree to a different period.
2. If a Pastor should depart from the Word of God in conduct or doctrine as defined in this Constitution or By-Laws or if he has lost the confidence of the congregation, he will be counseled in love by the Board of Elders. Should this not have the desired result, he may be dismissed by a simple majority vote (51%) of the members voting at a Congregational Business Meeting. Any severance pay will be determined by the Board of Elders.
3. Heresy and conduct unbecoming a Pastor are grounds for immediate removal from pastoral responsibilities by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders will then recommend dismissal at a Congregational Business Meeting. The Pastor may be dismissed by a simple majority vote (51%) of the members voting at a Congregational Business Meeting. Any severance pay will be determined by the Board of Elders.

E. Membership

The Pastor and his wife become members at the time that they begin their ministry at Chicago Swahili Chapel.

F. Additional Pastoral Staff

1. The need for additional pastoral staff will be determined by the Board of Elders
2. The search process will be conducted in the same manner as stated in Article 6, Section C above. The Pastor will be included as an ex-officio member of the Pastoral Search Team.
3. The Pastor will be identified as the Senior Pastor or other appropriate title to designate his senior pastoral leadership. Additional staff titles and job descriptions will be determined by the Board of Elders before the Pastoral Search Team begins its work.
4. The Board of Elders will determine at the time of hiring whether the pastoral position will carry the privilege and responsibility of serving as an Elder on the Board of Elders and/or whether this person will serve as a Ministry Team Leader or as a part of a Ministry Team.

G. Non-Pastoral Staff

1. The need for non-pastoral staff will be determined by the Board of Elders (in cooperation with the Pastor).
2. The hiring of these staff members will be by the Board of Elders (with assistance by a Ministry Team, task force, or committee as needed).
3. The job description, pay or salary and other hiring issues will be determined by the Board of Elders.

Article 7 Voting and Elections

A. Procedure

1. All members, 18 years of age and older, and present at the congregational meeting will be eligible to vote. The exception would be a member under discipline and not eligible to vote.
2. The quorum for all Congregational Business Meetings will be those members present, but not less than six members. If less than six members are present, then another Congregational Business Meeting will be scheduled.
3. Unless otherwise specified, all votes require a 51% majority vote of the members voting.
4. Election of individual Elders and Officers will be by written ballot.
5. All Elders and Officers will be affirmed by a 75% majority vote of the membership voting at a Congregational Business Meeting.

B. Nominations

1. The Board of Elders will be responsible for organizing a Nominating Team. The Board of Elders will openly solicit the membership for persons to serve on the Nominating Team. The Nominating Team will consist of one Elder and four church members. The Chairman of the Board of Elders and the Pastor are ex-officio members of the Nominating Team. The Board of Elders will select a Chairperson for the Nominating Team.
2. The Nominating Team will carefully and prayerfully consider qualified people and prepare a ballot listing qualified nominees for each office. Offices requiring nomination include:
 - a. Elders
 - b. Secretary
 - c. Financial Secretary
 - d. Treasurer
3. The Nominating Team will ask the congregation for recommendations of people to be nominees and will consider these recommendations in determining a final ballot of qualified nominees.
4. The Nominating Team should strive to find the best single candidate for each open office and present this to the congregation for the 75% majority vote of affirmation. If the congregation desires to nominate a candidate or candidates from the floor and multiple candidates are running for a particular position, then the candidate that receives the majority vote will be affirmed. A nomination from the floor requires that the person nominated is present to give consent to their name being placed on the ballot and they are qualified for the nominated position.

C. Appointments

The Board of Elders may appoint someone to temporarily fill a vacant office until the next Annual Congregational Meeting.

D. Limitations

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary will be elected for a one-year term. The Elders will be elected for a term of three years. No person can be elected for more than three consecutive terms in the same office. A person is eligible for three more terms after a one-year sabbatical.

Article 8 Amendments

Amendments to these By-Laws must be approved by the Board of Elders or submitted by five members from different households to the Board of Elders who will be required to present the amendment at a Congregational Business Meeting. The Board of Elders will inform the members in writing at least two weeks before a Congregational Business Meeting and the announcement will also be made at the church worship services one week before the Congregational Business Meeting. At the Congregational Business Meeting the amendment will be discussed and may be passed as written by a 75% majority vote of the members voting.

ARTICLE 9. PROPERTY

The church may in its corporate name sue or be sued, acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise own, hold, invest, re-invest, or dispose of property, both real and personal, for such work as the church may undertake and may purchase, own, receive, hold, manage care for and transfer, rent, lease, mortgage, or otherwise encumber, sell assign, transfer, and convey such property for general purposes of the church; it may receive and hold in trust both real and personal property and invest and reinvest the same and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of the church. The afore-mentioned requirements are subject to two-thirds majority vote of the membership.

ARTICLE 10 DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution of the church, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then possessed, including any devise, bequest, gift, or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to another evangelical church that the elder board sees fit.

ARTICLE 11 CONCEAL AND CARRY POLICY

It is the Policy of Chicago Swahili Chapel that persons attending the Church shall NOT be permitted to carry concealed firearms in the Church, or at any places of religious worship or activity utilized by the Church. The church may hire a security guard/s who will then be exempt from this rule.

ARTICLE 7 VOTING AND ELECTIONS

The board of elders will carry on with the voting and elections of the church elders and leadership for the time being. As the church grows in number, the board of elders shall meet to determine when the congregation can be involved in the voting of the church elders and leadership. The presiding pastor, following biblical leadership structures established in this constitution shall be responsible for electing the team of elders after every three years. Elders who are filled with the Spirit of God and gifted in different areas of ministry will help the pastor in /executing and accomplishing the vision and the mission of the church.