

# **BY-LAWS**

**DEBRE-HAIL KEDUS GABRIEL and KEDUS  
YOHANNES METMIK ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX  
TEWAHEDO CHURCH**

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## **BY-LAWS**

of

# **DEBRE HAIL KEDUS GABRIEL . and KEDUS YOHANNES METMIKMETMIKU CHURCH**

## **ARTICLE I. OFFICE**

1. The initial address of Debre Hail Kedus Gabriel and Kedus Yohannes Metmik Church shall be 1611 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20009.
2. The church shall have a registered agent and a permanent office in the District of Columbia. The office can be located within the church premises or in another location where the Administrative Board may determine.

## **ARTICLE II. OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of the church are as follows:

1. Protect and disseminate the Tewahido faith.
2. Educate the laity according to their age group and availability.
3. Conduct processions of baptism, communion and marriage in accordance with the church ordinance.
4. Pray in unison for the deceased, imprisoned and for those who are in adversity.
5. Conduct prayer of absolution to Tewahido believers in time of death.
6. Educate the new generation to understand, receive and preserve the religion, faith and culture of its predecessors.
7. Promote love and compassion among the Christian population as Jesus Christ says "Love one another as I love thou."
8. Bring peace among those in conflict for the Lord says that those who bring peace among the quarreled are holy.
9. Assist priests, monks and nuns residing as refuge at historical parishes and monasteries in Ethiopia by providing food, clothing and money. Assist them to organize towards self-sufficiency and to establish humanitarian association to help the poor.
10. Contribute to the welfare of our country by collaborating with Orthodox Tewahido Churches in the vicinity and elsewhere in Ethiopia.
11. Provide the necessary service to expatriates who are followers of the Tewahido faith.
12. Cooperate with those trying to start a church of Tewahido faith as needed.
13. Protect followers of the Tewahido religion from alien belief and corrupt practices.
14. Avoid spreading information that would disunite the public and disrupt the unity of the churches for the church stands for religious and spiritual service .

## **ARTICLE                    DUTIES OF ASSEMBLY OF WORSHIPERS AND PRIESTS**

The general assembly shall have the final say pertaining to the affairs of the church. The general assembly shall have the following duties:

### **A. Specific Duties**

1. Revise and approve the By-laws as necessary.
2. Elect nine members of the Administrative Board every three years. Eight of the members shall be elected by democratic vote of the general assembly. The ninth member shall be the vicar of the church who shall serve, as chairperson of the administration. The Administrative Board may remove and replace any member before his/her term of office expires as deemed necessary.
3. Approve the annual work plan and budget submitted by the Administrative Board .
4. Monitor annual progress report. Passes final decision to relevant issues.
5. Overlooks the affairs, belongings and status of the church.
6. Assign duties and responsibilities to priests and deacons as proposed by the Administrative Board. Terminate incompetent members and replace them with new ones.

### **B. Meetings of the General Assembly**

1. All meetings shall begin and finish with prayer.
2. The annual meeting of the general assembly shall be held once a year in the month of September.
3. Special (urgent) meeting of the general assembly may be called by the Administrative Board with a written request of one fourth of the members or if a minimum of six Board members request in writing or when the Chairman of the Administrative Board requests in writing.
4. The presence of two third of paid members constitute a quorum.
5. Chairperson of the Administration Board leads the general assembly.
6. Decision reached by the general assembly shall be final only if it has the consent of two-third of the attending members. The Administrative Board shall execute all decisions reached by the general assembly unless the assembly transfers the power to others.
7. Priests and deacons can run for election and/or cast their votes.

### **C. Election of Officers**

As cited in Article III A.2, the nine members of the administrative board shall elect the following officers:

- a. Chairman
- b. Vice chairman
- c. Secretary
- d. Assistant Secretary
- e. Financial Administrator (Accountant)

The remaining four shall serve in the following capacity:

- 2 Public relations officer 1
- Treasurer
- 1 Property Manager

### **D. Duties and responsibilities of the Administrative Board**

1. Prepare administrative and financial directives for approval by the general assembly.
2. Prepare annual report.
3. Prepare short and long-term work plan and annual budget to be presented to the general assembly in the month of August.
4. Oversee sub-committees. Examine and approve proposals and work plans presented by sub-committees.
5. Represent the church in signing contracts, suing and being sued.
6. Preside at regular and special (urgent) meetings in accordance with Article HI B..
7. Finalize the terms of reference for priests assigned to deliver spiritual services as specified by the Chairperson of the Administrative Board.
8. Monitor the performance of priests and deacons in line with the church's rules and regulations regarding confidentiality. Take appropriate measure on those performing against contractual agreement.
- 9 Approves reports submitted by sub-committees.
- 10 The Administrative Board represents the church in all affairs.

### **E. Meetings of the Administrative Board**

1. The Administrative Board shall hold regular monthly meetings. The Chairperson may call

special (urgent) meeting as necessary. He/she shall preside at all meetings. Notices of meetings shall be given one week prior to the meeting.

2. Five members of the Administrative Board shall constitute a quorum. However, a minimum of seven members of the Administrative Board is required to pass a decision. The chairperson shall cast a vote to break a tie.
3. Minutes of the Administrative Board shall be prepared by the Secretary and signed by all attending members. Minutes shall be read at the opening of the next meeting. All corrections and amendments shall be recorded.

## **F. Duties of Officers of the Administrative Board**

### **1. Chairperson**

- a. Shall preside over meetings of the Board and general assembly.
- b. Signs contracts and legal documents delegating the church.
- c. Oversee the administration of the church.
- d. Identifies and recommends potential individuals among the laity who can offer outstanding service to the church.

### **2. Vice Chairperson**

- a. Directs the Administrative Board and the general assembly in the absence of the chairperson.
- b. Performs the duties of the chairperson.
- c. Performs additional duties as required.
- d. Prepares budget proposal in collaboration with the Treasurer.

### **3. Secretary**

The Secretary shall be responsible to the Chairperson and performs the following duties:

- a. Records all proceedings of meetings of the Administrative Board and the general assembly.
- b. Communicates decisions reached by the Administrative Board to concerned parties.
- c. Shall have custody of the post office box key and seal of the church.

#### **4. Assistant Secretary**

Performs duties as outlined above 3 (a to c) in the absence of the Secretary.

#### **5. Financial Administrator (Accountant)**

Performs the following financial activities of the church using state of the art financial procedures.

- a. Keeps financial records of the church.
- b. Keeps accurate record of receipts.
- c. Maintains accounting records of income from various sources.
- d. Prepares budget with the Secretary.
- e. Monitors appropriate expenditure of the approved budget.
- g. Responsible for timely and appropriate collection of funds.
- h. Monitors appropriate deposits of revenues in accordance with internal guidelines.
- i. Assures effective management of property and finance.
- j. Assures accuracy of expenditure in accordance with approved budget.
- k. Determines the timely settlement of debts.
- l. Co-signs checks and credit vouchers.
- m. Submits financial report to the Chairperson.
- n. Prepares accounting report to be presented to the general assembly.
- o. Conduct timely reconciliation of the bank statement.
- p. Performs other duties as assigned by the Administrative Board.

#### **6. Treasurer**

The Treasure shall be responsible for monitoring and supervising the financial affairs of the church as follows:

- a. Receives and deposits in a bank all monies in accordance to the guidelines.
- b. Shall have custody of financial documents and checks.
- d. Shall disburse funds per authorized documents.
- e. Shall have custody of offerings box key.
- d. Reconciles bank statements with the church financial account.
- e. Prepares monthly and periodical income and expenses statements to concerned parties.
- f. Performs other duties as assigned.

#### **7. Property Manager**

The Property Manager shall be responsible for all church property and shall assume the following duties:

- a. Keeps a record of moveable and non-movable properties of the church.
- b. Assures the timely availability of non-durable items.
- c. Assures the neatness of the church premises and its compound.
- d. Documents old and obsolete properties for auction, sale or disposal and get approval

from the Administrative Board for those, which needs maintenance.

- e. Purchases materials for use by the church provided no other alternative is available.

Performs other duties assigned by higher authority.

## **G. Concerning Spiritual Services**

Priests, deacons and worshipers alike will serve the church and the general believers based on the rites and norms of the Ethiopian Orthodox religion in implementing the spiritual, cultural and humanitarian services outlined in Article II of this By-laws. Accordingly, the following duties are identified:

### **Deputy Administrator of the Parish**

The Deputy Administrator reports to the Chairperson of the Administrative Board and performs the following duties:

1. Monitors that the church service including worship, baptism and the sermon are conducted in accordance to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church doctrine
2. Monitors that presentation of spiritual services to worshipers is in line with church doctrines. Shall have custody of records of baptism, marriage and death in cooperation with the administration office.
3. In cooperation with the Administrative Board, assures the completeness of daily service materials.
4. Presents support and solutions for anticipated problems as needed
5. Gives directives to priests and deacons serving the church. Promotes expansion of church song and church education.
6. Participates in administrative meetings.
7. Encourages the active participation of young and adult singers by composing spiritual songs.
8. Administers priests and deacons guided by directives from above and own initiative.
9. Protects donated church property
10. Shall serve the Debre Hail Kedus Gabriel and Kedus Yohannes Metmik Church in accordance with the directives given by the administrator of the parish.
11. Offers spiritual service to the church worshipers.



## ARTICLE IV. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRIESTS AND WORSHIPERS

### 1. Rights and Responsibilities of Priests

#### Rights

- a. Shall receive compensation, housing, health insurance and transport if unemployed or limited to serving the church.
- b. Shall qualify to be elected as a member of the Administrative Board.
- c. Shall qualify to express opinion and to cast votes in electing members of the Administrative Board as any member of the church.
- d. Those who have income but serving the church may be compensated provided that the church has the resources.
- e. Receives proper fatherly and priestly care.

#### Responsibilities

- a. Abide by the rules and regulations of the Debre Hail Kedus Gabriel and Kedus Yohannes Metmik Church.
- b. Execute the spiritual service offered in the church in sincerity and honesty.
- c. Advise, teach and comfort worshipers wherever necessary.
- d. Preserve the spiritual doctrine of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church

### 2. Rights and Responsibilities of Members

#### Rights

- a. Obtain membership identity card.
- b. Shall be eligible to express views and cast vote in the election of members of the Administration Board six months after registering as a member.
- c. Shall have the right to be elected to the Administrative Board, one year after joining the membership and fully paying the annual membership fee.

#### Responsibilities

- a. Every member must participate in the development effort and spiritual growth of the church.
- b. Reserve from activities that affect well being of the church and the unity of the worshipers.
- c. Participate in the church aid programs.
- d. Respect the rules and regulations of the church.

- . Comply with membership requirements on time. If unable to pay membership dues, notify in advance the Administrative Board to provide voluntary service in lieu of payment.
- e. Participate as much as possible in the church's sabbatical and other spiritual services.

### **3. Removal from Membership**

A member shall be removed the church membership for the following reasons:

- a. Non-payment of membership fee and failing to meet membership duties without sufficient reasons
- b. For practicing in activities contrary to the faith and discipline of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido faith and not complying to advise given by the church administrator and the Administration Board.
- c. A member leaving voluntarily or removed by the church for disciplinary reasons, shall have no right to claim any property of the church. All past and present donations to the church become property of the church.

## **ARTICLE V: NOMINATION OF MEMBERS I.**

### **Nominating Committee**

- a. A Nominating Committee that will coordinate all elections nominated by the general assembly shall be appointed by the general assembly six weeks prior to election.
- b. Election of members for the Nominating Committee shall be done by the members of the active Administrative Board.

### **2. Criteria for Candidacy to the Administrative Board**

■ Candidate for membership in the Administrative Board must meet the following criteria:

- a. Must be a resident of Washington metropolitan area and regular member who has complied with payment of membership fee.
- b. Member for at least one year
- c. Regularly attending the church.
- d. Ability to work with the public.
- e. Free from drug and other wrong doings

- f. Having no criminal records
- g. Having adequate qualification to the post elected.
- h. Willingness to provide volunteer service.
- i. **Is not an elected officer of any political organization.**

■ A member cannot be elected for more than two consecutive terms in the Administrative Board.

### **3. Power and Duties of the Nominating Committee**

- a. The Nomination Committee shall have five members. The Chairperson and Secretary shall **be** elected from the five members. The committee shall prepare its guidelines in accordance with these By-laws.
- b. Members of the nominating committee will not qualify for nomination to the Administrative Board.
- c. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a nomination form to be used by the general assembly for nominating members. The time allocated for nomination should not be less than three weeks.
- d. The Nominating Committee shall inform the last day of Nominations in due time.
- e. The Nominating Committee shall review the nomination of eligible candidates in accordance with the criteria given in Article 5 No. 2 of this document, and present 12 candidates to the general assembly one week prior to election of nine members of the Administrative Board.
- f. Election will be conducted through a ballot. The Nominating Committee shall give members at least two weeks to cast their votes.

After presenting the elections result to the general assembly, the Nominating Committee shall lead the first meeting of the Administrative Board to conduct internal election.

- h. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for the transfer of office between the outgoing and the incoming Administrative Board. Its term will terminate after reporting the election results to the general assembly.
- i. The transfer between the outgoing and the incoming Administrative Board must be completed in two weeks. The new Board shall not assume its responsibility before the transfer is completed.

The Nominating Committee shall submit to the incoming Administrative Board all the voting documents, minutes and ballots to be kept in the church office.

## **ARTICLE VI.      INDIRECT SOURCES OF INCOME**

The church shall device various sources of income in order to fulfill its economic development programs.

### **1.      Income Generating Projects**

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1.      Fund raising projects
2.      Seek funding assistance from different humanitarian agencies and individuals.
3.      Generate funds by devising means of obtaining items for sale.

## **ARTICLE VII.      AMENDMENTS**

These By-laws replace any existing By-laws.

These By-laws may be amended at any time at the request of 51% of the general assembly. The amended By-laws shall be ratified when 2/3 of the general assembly approves it.

## **ARTICLE VIII. DATE OF EFFECTIVENESS**

These By-laws shall be effective when registered and ratified by the laws of the District of Columbia.

We followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido religion residing in North America, in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan area, with God's will, have united and put our resources together to establish the Debre Hail Kedus Gabriel and Kedus Yohannes Metmik church as a place of worship and center for learning of the Almighty's words. We have mobilized manpower, knowledge and capital to create this church which is a holy venue where every Orthodox Christian, regardless of race, color and language, will be served with equality. We have to give our full attention to God when we assemble for liturgy.