

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of "St. John of Rila"

Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church

PREAMBLE

We, the members of "St. John of Rila" Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church in order to form a better Union, cultivate Christianity, provide the general welfare of all Eastern Orthodox Christians whose origin is Bulgarian and other Eastern Orthodox Christians in the City of Washington, District of Columbia, and its suburbs of Maryland and Virginia, and also in the city of Baltimore and its suburbs, do hereby ordain and adopt the Charter of "St. John of Rila" Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church as our Constitution.

ARTICLE I... NAME:

The name of said Church shall be: "St John of Rila" Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church. The official languages of this Church shall be BULGARIAN and ENGLISH.

ARTICLE II... GOVERNING LAWS:

This Church is strictly and exclusively a religious incorporated legal entity with all appurtenant rights and privileges under the existing laws of the City of Washington, District of Columbia, and the existing laws of the United States of America.

ARTICLE III... ASSOCIATION:

This Church's Religious Corporation has originated in the City of Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America, and shall be organized under the current governing laws of said. As a Canonical Spiritual Organ, this Church is under the Ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Diocesan Bishop of the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church, Diocese of the United States of America and Canada of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA).

ARTICLE IV... PRINCIPAL OFFICE:

The principal office of the Corporation is to be located in Washington, D.C. metropolitan region, United States of America. The initial address of the Church's Corporation shall be a P.O. Box at a convenient location for the Pastor of the Church, until a permanent address of Church Property is established. In order to keep all the affairs of the Church Corporation open and available for review of the leadership of the Church, the Pastor shall receive all correspondence of the Church and open it together with the Secretary. The Secretary shall then make both electronic and paper archive copies of all the correspondence and immediately forward them to all members of the Church Board (Board of Trustees).

ARTICLE V... MISSION:

The purpose or purposes for which said Corporation is formed are:

Section 1. To unite religiously and ecclesiastically in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ all Eastern Orthodox Christians whose origin is Bulgarian, or any other Eastern Orthodox Christians and their families of whatever national origin residing in Washington, D.C. and all

surrounding areas, and to satisfy their religious and spiritual needs and purvey to all their church requirements.

Section 2. To provide a place of public worship and facilities for moral and religious instruction, social, physical, civic, and educational programs for its members and their families, and conduct the same according to the teachings of the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Canons of the Eastern Orthodox Church, in conformity with the tradition and regulations of the Eastern Orthodox Church, rules and regulations presented by the Trustees of the Corporation with the approval of at least two-thirds of the membership.

Section 3. To purchase, own, and maintain suitable real estate buildings and personal property of all kinds and do any and all things necessary or incident to the accomplishment of the purposes herein out.

Section 4. In the event this Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church in Washington, District of Columbia, should lose all of its membership and cease to exist, all assets, title to all real property and buildings and improvements thereon held by the Church shall vest in an escrow account with the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church, Orthodox Church in America (OCA), which will keep them in trust for 5 years or until a new church is organized with the same structure and purposes as indicated in this Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE VI: LEADERSHIP:

The affairs of the Corporation shall be controlled and conducted according to the ARTICLES of this Constitution by a Board of seven or nine (7-9) Trustees (Church Board) with the consultation and spiritual advice of the designated Priest of the Parish.

Section 1. The Trustees, who must be members in good standing shall be nominated by the members of the Parish to the Nominating Committee and elected by a simple majority (50% + 1 votes) of the members at the annual meeting to serve for four years.

Section 2. The Trustees shall elect from among themselves a President, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and four (4) members at Large, and may select assistants and appoint members to committees as are necessary to carry out the purpose of said Church Corporation.

Section 3. The Trustees, who shall be elected by the first Church meeting, shall serve four year. All following Trustees elected shall have a four year term. Every new meeting shall elect or re-elect Trustees to replace any vacated numbers of the Board of Trustees.

Section 4. The Trustees shall be nominated and elected only among the members of the Church who are American citizens or alien residents (green card holders) who are baptized in the Eastern Orthodox Christian Faith and have no political affiliation to organizations professing anti-religious doctrines or teachings.

ARTICLE VII: DUTIES OF TRUSTEES:

Section 1. The Board of Trustees shall transact the business and control the property and finances of the Church as directed in the Articles of the Constitution.

Section 2. Each member of the Board of Trustees is morally bound before God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and his Christian conscience to attend the Sunday and Feast Day Divine Services as often as possible, to receive Holy Communion, and to encourage the members to do likewise.

Section 3. A member of the Board of Trustees, who applies unorthodox Christian conduct in the performance of his duties as a trustee, may be removed by the Bishop or may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Church membership with the confirmation of the Bishop.

ARTICLE VIII... DUTIES OF OFFICERS:

Section 1. With the blessing of the Pastor, the President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees, and shall present a report at the Annual Meeting of the activities of the Congregation during the preceding year. He shall be the Agent of the church corporation and a non-official member of all committees.

Section 2. The Secretary shall call the roll and keep the minutes of all the meetings of the congregation and of the Board of Trustees, read all such minutes at the next regular meeting of the Congregation and of the Board of Trustees, conduct the correspondence, send out notices at least seven days prior to the call of the day, contact each member personally when necessary, keep a list of members, present all the work of the Committees and of the Congregation during the preceding year to the Board of Trustees, and perform such other duties as the Board of Trustees may direct. In his absence, the duties of the Secretary shall be performed by the Assistant Secretary who may have other duties assigned by the Board of Trustees.

Section 3. The Treasurer shall keep an account of all receipts and disbursements in a book (accounting software), collect dues, send out receipts, deposit all the funds in the name of the Church in a designated bank, make payments by check only on the order of the Board of

Trustees, with the signature of the President and the Treasurer. There should be 3 signatures registered for the accounts, but only 2 required on the checks. He shall present a full report at the Board of Trustees meeting and shall present a full report at each meeting of the Congregation and of the Board of Trustees and shall give a complete report, examined by the Auditing Committee that has been elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting. In his absence, the duties of the Treasurer shall be performed by the Assistant Treasurer who may have other duties as assigned by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE IX... MEMBERSHIP:

Section 1. Any Eastern Orthodox Christian, duly baptized and chrismated, eighteen years of age or over, who has declared his/her faith in the Eastern Orthodox Church to the Pastor, is eligible to become a member.

Section 2. Candidates for new members are accepted by the following procedures: The candidate submits a written-form application to the Church Board of the Congregation. The application must be accompanied by a payment of membership dues for the current year established by the Church Board. If the candidate is rejected by the Church Board, he/she may appeal the decision at the Annual Meeting.

Section 3. Members may participate in the respective annual meetings, regular meetings and special meetings in person or by written proxy.

ARTICLE X... DUTIES OF THE MEMBERS:

Section 1. Each member is morally bound before God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and his Christian conscience to support the Church, to attend the Sunday and Feast Day Divine Services, to receive Holy Communion, to lead a life in conformity of the Eastern Orthodox precepts, and to encourage his family to do likewise.

Section 2. Each parishioner must conduct himself toward the Authority of the Diocesan Bishop and the Parish Pastor with reverence and respect, and cooperate with them in the performance of their duties.

Section 3. Each parishioner must have respect toward all his fellow members and the administration of the Church.

Section 4. At the direction of the Board of Trustees, any parishioner who applies unorthodox conduct, inconsistent with the purposes of this Church, may be expelled or suspended by two-thirds vote of those present at General Parish meeting, and that his dues be refunded on a pro-rated basis.

ARTICLE XI... REVENUE:

Section 1. The financial support shall be derived from regular membership dues, ecclesiastical and religious fees, programs, projects, candle offerings, voluntary contributions, grants, legacies, and such other philanthropic deeds.

ARTICLE XII... DUES :

Section 1. The Board of Trustees shall determine by a majority vote the current year's dues. The dues shall be payable by the members for the ensuing year before the Annual Meeting in November.

Section 2. Any person or family becoming a member during the year shall pay the established dues. There shall be a family membership discount determined by the Board.

Section 3. Members whose dues from the previous year remain unpaid at the time of Annual Meeting shall not be permitted to vote or be nominated for any office of the Church, and may be dropped from the roll at the direction of the Board of Trustees by a majority vote of the members

ARTICLE XIII... MEETINGS:

There shall be regular, special and annual meetings held by the Church Congregation. The Pastor shall officiate all such meetings. He shall also be present at all Meetings of the Board, and, along with the secretary, must sign the minutes of all meetings confirming his approval.

Section 1. Regular meetings of the membership shall be held as needed.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or by any three members of the Board of Trustees with the blessing of the Pastor.

Section 3. The Annual Meeting shall be held on any Sunday of November, or as feasible, for the reading of all annual reports, for amending the Constitution and BY-LAWS, for the election of officers, and for the payment of all dues.

Section 4. The Board of Trustees shall hold regular meetings once a month and may meet on the same date before or after the regular meeting of the Congregation for the transaction of business.

Section 5. A member of the Board of Trustees who without reason is absent from three consecutive regular Board Meetings is considered to be giving up his responsibilities as a trustee and may be replaced at the next Church Meeting by a vote of the majority of the members.

ARTICLE XIV... QUORUM:

Section 1. The presence of at least fifty percent (50%) of the regular members and proxies shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any regular or special meeting of the congregation.

Section 2. The presence of at least fifty percent (50%) of the regular members and proxies shall constitute a quorum at the election of the Board of Trustees.

Section 3. The presence of at least two-thirds of the Trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any Board of Trustees meeting.

Section 4. Whenever a quorum is not present at any meeting, a motion should be adopted to schedule another meeting within two weeks.

ARTICLE XV... ELECTIONS:

Section 1. The Nominating Committee shall be elected at a General Parish Meeting and prepare a slate of candidates. Parish Members may give their nominees to the Nominating Committee. The slate of candidates must be reviewed by the Pastor for the purpose of eligibility before it is brought before the membership for voting.

Section 2. Members absent from the Annual Meeting shall not be eligible for any office of the church congregation , except in the case of a justifiable reason.

Section 3. All vacancies of the Board of Trustees shall be filled by a call of a special election meeting or at the next Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE XVI... COMMITTEES:

Section 1. A committee or committees, consisting of the Board of Trustees, shall make necessary recommendations to the committees and appoint their chairmen, vice chairmen, and members.

Section 2. The Finance Committee, consisting of three regular members, shall devise and direct the plans for raising money to carry on the work of the Congregation.

Section 3. The Program Committee, consisting of twelve (12) regular members, shall make plans for all Church activities for the ensuing year.

Section 4. An Auditing Committee, consisting of three regular members shall examine the accounts of the Church Treasurer and of the treasurer of any auxiliary organization at each regular and each annual meeting.

Section 5. The audit for any annual meeting shall be made between the first and fourth Sundays of September. The Auditing Committee shall instruct the Board of Trustees and the officers of the auxiliary organizations not to defray any expenses until the new administration of the respective organization takes office.

Section 6. A Membership Committee, consisting of three regular members, to whom all names for membership are submitted, shall review the qualifications of all applicants and report to the Board of Trustees for action to be taken at the next regular or annual meeting.

ARTICLE XVII... CHURCH ASSISTANTS:

Section 1. The Sextons shall assist the Pastor during all church services.

Section 2. The Chanters, who are assisted by the church choir, shall perform all passages of the Liturgy required during all church services.

Section 3. The Ushers shall see that all persons are provided with seats during the church services, light candles upon the request of any persons, and welcome all the guests.

Section 4. Those attending the Desk at the entrance of the Church shall look after all candle requests and offerings to the church.

Section 5. The Custodians shall look after the maintenance of the Church Buildings and Grounds.

ARTICLE XVIII... PASTOR:

Section 1. At the head of the Parish is its Rector (Pastor). The Pastor is the servant of God and our Lord Jesus Christ and the spiritual leader of the church community. It is his obligation to assist the church administration in guiding and coordinating all the church activities and attend and give his blessing for the meetings.

Section 2. The Pastor shall abide by all the Canons of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Church, observe the Constitution and BY-LAWS of this parish, officiate regularly at the Sunday and Feast-Day Divine Services, administer all the Holy sacraments and rites to the parishioners, extend true pastoral charity and gentleness toward all mankind, give aid to everyone who comes to him for advice and conduct himself with reverence and respect towards the Authority of the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 3. The Pastor shall not be eligible to be a member of the Board of Trustees and shall not undertake any official policy or correspondence without the knowledge of the Board of Trustees.

Section 4. The Pastor shall be responsible for preparing the church bulletin. The last bulletin issue of the calendar year shall contain the summary of the yearly religious activities.

Section 5. The Pastor shall be granted a three weeks annual paid vacation with the consultation of the Board of Trustees and with the blessing of the Diocesan Bishop. In the event that the Pastor does not take a vacation, he is entitled to one half of the monthly salary

Section 6. For every absence from his regular parish service the Pastor must ask the consent of the Board of Trustees.

Section 7. The salary of the Pastor is geared according to the living conditions of the community and may be decided at the first regular meeting by a majority vote of the membership, upon the recommendations of the Board of Trustees and approval of the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 8. The Deacon, who may have variously defined duties in the Church, is a member of the clerical order next below that of the Pastor.

Section 9. Whenever the parish is in need of securing a regular pastor or a deacon, the Board of Trustees, with the consent of the members, may notify the Diocesan Bishop to name available candidates for consideration. The name of the candidate, who was chosen by a majority vote of the members, may be sent to the Diocesan Bishop who is to make the necessary provisions.

Section 10. Whenever the parish is in need of securing a regular pastor or a deacon and no pastors or deacons are available, the Board of Trustees, with the consent of the members, shall notify the Diocesan Bishop to name for consideration the available candidates desiring to be ordained. The name of the candidate, who was chosen by

a majority vote of the members at a meeting presided by a Pastor appointed by the Bishop, shall be sent to the Diocesan Bishop who is to make the necessary provisions for ordinations.

ARTICLE XIX... AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS:

Section 1. Auxiliary organizations may be formed with the consent of a majority vote by the Congregation at the direction of the Board of Trustees.

Section 2. The Constitution and BY-LAWS of the Parish shall govern any Auxiliary Organization.

ARTICLE XX... COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE PARISH AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC:

Section 1. The Church Board shall conduct constant communications with the membership and the general public in order to keep them informed about upcoming events and the general affairs of the Church.

Section 2. All forms of communications shall be allowed - mail, e-mail, telephone or personal.

Section 3. The Secretary shall maintain a full contact list of the parish, to include regular members and non-members. After the Church Bulletin has been approved, the secretary shall disburse it to the parish. Copy of the Contact List shall be provided to the President with any changes or additions.

Section 4. The Church Board shall register a web site and appoint a webmaster to maintain it. The President and the webmaster shall have all access information for the web-site, which shall be transferable at the election of new President or appointment of new webmaster.

ARTICLE XXI... AMENDMENTS:

Section 1. These Constitution and BY-LAWS may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the entire membership at the Annual Meeting, provided notice of such amendments shall have been given in writing at the previous regular meeting.

These CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS were accepted by not less than two-thirds of the membership assembled at annual meeting on May, 20, 2007 and was approved by the Bishop.

