

Debre Genet Medhane Alem
Mutual Aid Association

Bylaws (Agreement)

Fourth Amendment

May 3, 2015

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Introduction

We, members of the Debre Genet Medhane Alem Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church:

1. Realizing that it is important that we console and support one another in times of sorrow and sickness;
2. Understanding that we have been unable to know and be close to one another due to our living and work circumstances unless obligations arise, have established the Debre Genet Medhane Alem Mutual Aid Association;

The Mutual Aid Association's Bylaws is divided into three sections, comprised of 32 (Thirty two) articles. The first section describes the fundamental organization of the Association, particularly the rights and responsibilities of its members. The second section describes the functions of the Association's General Assembly and Executive Committee. The last section describes the Association's legality, and the structure and terms of office of the members of the Executive Committee.

Definition

1. The Association is a non-profit organization established by members of the Debre Genet Medhane Alem Church in order to support and console one another in times of sickness and death as 'Debre Genet Medhane Alem Mutual Aid Association'.
2. In these Bylaws, 'Association' means the mutual aid established by members of the

Debre Genet Medhane Alem Church.

3. 'Member' means a member of the mutual aid that has been registered by meeting the obligations detailed in these Bylaws.
4. 'Bylaws' means the Bylaws of the Association ratified and enforced by the General Assembly.
5. 'Individual' means any person registered as a member of the Mutual Aid Association in his/her individual capacity.
6. 'Family' means a married couple registered together as husband and wife. Family also includes biological as well as adopted children.
7. 'Adopted' means an adopted child who is legally recognized. He/she has the same rights as a biological child.
8. 'General Assembly' means the highest administrative organ of the Debre Genet Medhane Alem Mutual Aid Association. The attendance of two-thirds of its members will constitute a quorum of the General Assembly.
9. 'Bed-ridden' means an individual rendered immobile due to illness or a severe accident.

Section 1: General

Article 1: Name of the Association

The Association shall be called Debre Genet Medhane Alem Mutual Aid Association.

Article 2: Address and Place of Assembly of the Association

- A. Address: Debre Genet Medhane Alem Mutual Aid Association
C/O Debre Genet Medhane Alem
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

4401 Old Branch Avenue
Temple Hills, Maryland
20748 USA

B. Place of Assembly: The place of assembly of the Association shall be in the premises of the Debre Genet Medhane Alem Church.

Article 3: Emblem or Seal

The Associations emblem or seal will be in the shape of a circle and will have the words 'Debre Genet Medhane Alem Mutual Aid Association' ; 'Prince George County' ; 'Temple Hills, Maryland' engraved.

Article 4: Purpose and Establishment

The Mutual Aid Association was established in 2011/2012 (2004 E.C.), and its main purpose is:

1. To develop strong social ties among members of Debre Genet Medhan Alem Church in order to face challenges that arise during times of sickness and grief together.
2. The Association was established as a tax-exempt, non-profit organization in accordance with Internal Revenue Code -501(C)(3). All donations from organizations and individuals to the Association are, therefore, also tax-exempt according to Internal Revenue Code Section (170)(C)(2).
3. The association will not have affiliations with any political organization.
4. The Association will respect the laws of the State of Maryland as well as Federal laws.
5. The Association will establish partnership with similar mutual aid associations in the United States and will strive to foster social assistance and cooperation within the limits of these Bylaws.
6. The Association will be funded by income from donations of members and other sources, and will have a budget plan prepared a year in advance by the Executive Committee.

Article 5: Requirements for Membership of the Association

1. Be older than eighteen years of age;
2. Be a member of Debre Genet Medhane Alem Church, having paid the Church's membership fee without interruption for one (1) year;
3. Fully comprehend and accept the Association's purpose;
4. Complete, place signature for approval and submit the Association's Membership Form to the Member Recruitment Sub-Committee in person;
5. An individual whose membership has been approved will receive the Association's Bylaws and his/her personal identification card;
6. In order to be full beneficiaries of the Association, a husband and wife should both be members of the Church as well as the Mutual Aid Association;
7. Should pay the registration and membership fees on time as stated in articles 7 and 8.
8. Be an individual with a good moral standing and without a criminal record.

Article 6: The Association's Means of Income

1. Income collected from monthly membership fees, registration fees as well as payment from the enforcement of the Bylaws;
2. Fundraising events organized by the Association;
3. Grants provided by philanthropic individuals and organizations, as well as government institutions;
4. Conducting income-generating research;
5. Rent and sales of assets.

Article 7: Registration

1. An individual can become a member only when he/she fulfills the membership requirements stated in Article 5, and when he/she pays the registration fee along with the monthly membership fees.
2. In accordance with the decision ratified on January 27,2013
 - A. An individual will pay \$200.00 Dollars when registering for individual membership.
 - B. A family (husband and wife) will pay \$300.00 Dollars when registering for membership.
3. A member will only be eligible for any financial assistance after he/she has been a member for a year while having paid his/her membership fee without interruption and meeting his/her membership obligations in accordance with the Bylaws.
4. Any member should first register his/her family during their initial registration.
5. A member should notify the Executive Committee of any changes (additions or removals) in his/her family in writing within a month. If a tragedy befalls a family of a member that has not made a written notification in the designated timeframe, the Association will not make any financial assistance to the unregistered member.
6. The Association's membership shall commence from the day of an individual's registration in accordance with these Bylaws, and the membership of his/her future spouse or family members shall commence from the day the existing member completes and submits the family registration form.

Article 8: Monthly Fees

1. A member registered as an individual shall pay a monthly fee of \$15.00 Dollars.
2. A member registered as a family (husband and wife) shall pay a monthly fee of \$20.00 Dollars.
3. A member shall pay his/her monthly membership fee within the first fifteen days of the

month.

Article 9: Rights of Members

1. If a member pays the registration fee indicated in Article 7:
 - A. Any member has the right to be present at, participate in and cast a vote at any meeting of the General Assembly, however, he/she can only be eligible for nomination if he/she has paid his/her membership fee without interruption for one year after registration while having fulfilling his/her membership obligations .
 - B. Will be visited by members if he/she falls ill, or will be consoled by members if his/her family member dies.
 - C. If he/she dies, the Association will place a flower bouquet at the funeral. Members will also attend the funeral and console the family.
2. Each member shall only cast a single vote.
3. After a member has registered and paid his/her monthly membership fee while having fulfilling his membership obligations:
 - A. If he/she dies, \$4,000.00 Dollars will be given to a legal representative to assist with funeral expenses.
 - B. If a child or a parent that lives on their own nearby or in a distant place dies, \$500.00 Dollars will be given for expenses for hosting funeral attendees.
 - C. If a person living with or staying as a guest in a member's house dies, \$500.00 Dollars will be given for expenses with hosting funeral attendees. Members will also attend the funeral.
4. If a spouse of a member that is not a member of the Association dies, \$1,500.00 Dollars will be given.
5. If a child of a family or individual member that is younger than 18, or is a full-time student younger than 24 years of age dies, \$2,000 Dollars will be given.

6. If a biological or adopted child of a member is unable to go to school or work, and is also unable to support him/herself and requires the assistance of members, the limitations stated in Article 9 number 5 may be lifted, once the circumstances have been presented to the Executive Committee in writing and verified. The Executive Committee shall brief the General Assembly of the circumstances.
7. In cases where parents of siblings who are members of the association in their individual capacity are visiting as guests, they can only be registered under one child. If a parent that is visiting as a guest dies, \$1,200.00 Dollars will be given to the member the parent is registered under. This only applies if the parent has not been registered as a guest for more than a year. If the parent has spent over a year as a registered guest, number 7 of this Article (9) will not apply.
8. If a member relocates to another place for work or any other reason but wishes to continue his/her membership in the Association, he/she can do so by notifying the Executive Committee in writing. He/she has to give a written and signed consent to another member of the Association to represent him/her at the General Assembly or during other activities of the Association.
9. A member can terminate his/her membership at any time by presenting a written notification to the Executive Committee. A member that leaves the Association on his/her accord will not be entitled to any membership rights. The fees he/she has paid to the Association will not be returned. He/she cannot replace another person in his/her stead.
10. If a member is mourning the loss of a spouse, a child, a parent (father or mother) or a sibling living in a distant location, members will visit and console him/her.
11. If the funeral is going to be held in Washington DC or nearby, members of the Association shall express their condolences by standing by the member. If the funeral is going to be held in another country, the members shall send off the coffin.
12. If the Association cannot provide assistance due to insufficient funds, the Executive Committee shall call an urgent meeting of the General Assembly and request a decision. It will record and file the decision in writing, and implement it.

Article 10: Membership Obligations

1. Fully understand and respect the rules and regulations of the Association.
2. Pay the monthly membership fee on time in accordance with the Bylaws.
3. To assign a fellow member as representative whenever an individual is unable to attend the Association's meetings for any reason.
4. To respect and abide by the membership obligations and rules of Debre Genet Medhane Alem Church.
5. If an individual membership in the church is terminated, his/her membership in the Mutual Aid Association will also be terminated. He/she will not be reimbursed for fees he/she has paid.
6. If a member who is the spouse of a registered member of the Church dies or gets divorced, he/she will have to first register as a member of the Church in order to continue as a member of the Association as an individual.
7. He/she shall register the name of another member that will represent him/her and his/her family on the family registration form.
8. A member should notify the association if a spouse, a child living with him/her or his/her parent falls ill, and members will either pay a visit in person or call to extend their well wishes.
9. If a member is mourning the loss of a relative (a child, parents or siblings), and he/she notifies the Executive Committee, members are obligated to visit his/her place and offer their condolences.
10. A member shall notify the Executive Committee, in person or through a written letter, if the rules and procedures of the Association are violated.

Article 11: Punishable Acts

1. A member shall pay an extra \$10.00 Dollars if he/she fails to pay the monthly membership

fee for three months or ninety days. If he/she fails to pay the monthly fee and the fine within the designated time period, his/her membership will be terminated. He/she will not be reimbursed for any payments made.

2. A member who fails to attend the bi-annual meeting of the General Assembly without sufficient reason and fails to assign another member to represent him/her shall pay an additional \$10.00 Dollars in addition to the monthly membership fee. If he/she fails to attend meetings repeatedly, the Executive Committee will decide on additional fines.
3. If it is confirmed that a member failed to attend a funeral or visit the family in mourning, the Executive Committee shall take action, including terminating his/her membership. He/she will be notified of the decision in writing.
4. If a member violates proper conduct during a meeting, or commits acts that harm the Association, one time or repeatedly, the Executive Committee shall decide on a punishment depending on the seriousness of the violation, from a fine up to termination of membership.
5. A member whose membership of the Association has been terminated in accordance with numbers 3 and 4 of this article will not be reimbursed for payments he/she has made. He/she is obligated to return items or cash he/she has received from the Association.

Article 12: Marriage and Divorce of Members

1. Members who were initially registered as individuals should notify the Association in writing within 30 (Thirty) days of their marriage, and continue their membership as a family by completing the family membership form.
2. If members that were registered as a couple get divorced, both individuals should separately notify the Association within 30 (Thirty) days of the dissolution of their marriage. The Executive Committee will review the matter and send letters to both individuals.
3. If a legally separated couple wish to continue their membership, they may do so by individually filling out a new membership form. They will not pay a registration fee.

Article 13: Reinstatement of Membership

1. A person who terminated his/her membership on his/her own accord can be reinstated upon

submitting a written letter to the Executive Committee and receiving approval, while having fulfilled the requirements stated in Article 7.

2. An individual whose membership was terminated in accordance with number 3 and 4 of Article 11 cannot have his/her membership reinstated.

Article 14: Electoral Committee

1. An Electoral Committee with five members shall be elected at the meeting of the General Assembly that takes place every three years during the month of November (Hidar).
2. Once members of the Electoral Committee are elected, they will begin their work by selecting a Chairperson and Secretary among themselves and compiling an internal guideline.
3. They will present two nominees for each post and hold an election for the members of the Executive Committee, an Internal Auditor and a Finance Officer at the special meeting of the General Assembly during the first week of the month of January (Tir).
4. The election will be conducted in private through written ballots, and the results will be immediately announced to the members at the meeting.
5. The official handover will be made three weeks after the election in the presence of the Electoral Committee, an Internal Auditor and two witnesses.
6. The Electoral Committee shall present a report on the election process to the Executive Committee's Secretary. The Secretary will then present the report at the next meeting of the General Assembly.
7. The service term of the Electoral Committee shall end upon the completion of the election process and the official handover of posts.

*{**If the election of the Church's Administrative Board and the Association's Executive Committee coincides, the election of members of the Administrative Board of the Church shall be held first, followed by the election of members of the Executive Committee of the Association.)*

Section 2: Administration

Article 15: General Assembly

The General Assembly is the Association's highest administrative organ comprised of all its members.

Article 16: Functions and Power of the General Assembly

1. Shall elect and remove members of the Executive Committee.
2. Shall amend the Association's Bylaws if the need arises.
3. Will appoint an External Auditor to review the Association's accounts if the need arises.
4. Will discuss and pass decisions on matters it considers important, as well as issues presented by the Executive Committee.
5. Will select a Legal Advisor and Auditor or Internal Controller.

Article 17: Meetings of the General Assembly

1. The General Assembly shall conduct meetings twice a year during the months of November (Hidar) and April (Miyazia). It may call emergency meetings if the need arises.
2. Every three years, during the month of November (Hidar), an Electoral Committee composed of five (5) members will be elected.
3. Unless stated in these Bylaws or declared through special articles for specific circumstances, the attendance of two-thirds of the members of the General Assembly shall constitute a quorum. A decision endorsed by more than half of the attendees of a quorum shall be considered as the decision of the General Assembly.
4. If a quorum is not present during a meeting of the General Assembly, the meeting will be postponed and recalled within two weeks. The second meeting will proceed even in the absence of a quorum, and a decision made by the majority of the attendees will be considered

as the decision of the General Assembly.

Article 18: The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is the second highest administrative organ after the General Assembly.

Article 19: The Power and Functions of the Executive Committee

1. Will prepare the annual budget a year in advance and present for approval by the General Assembly; and will administer the budget accordingly.
2. Will undertake the day-to-day activities of the Association in accordance with these Bylaws and the internal guidelines provided by the General Assembly.
3. Will take action on a member who doesn't fulfill his/her membership obligations and performs acts that harm the Association.
4. Will receive and register new members in cooperation with the Recruitment Committee.
5. Will call regular and urgent meetings of the General Assembly, and prepare the meeting agenda.
6. Will allocate a petty cash budget determined by the Chairperson.
7. Will review financial reports prepared every three months and provide guidelines.
8. Will verify that all funds received by the Association are deposited in the Association's bank account.
9. If at any time there is a need to make a payment of more than \$20,000.00 Dollars, the Executive Committee will first request the permission of the General Assembly.
10. Will form Subcommittees and provide operational guidelines when necessary.
11. Will temporarily replace Executive Committee members that are unable to perform their duties due to illness or other reasons. Will notify the General Assembly and get approval at its

next meeting.

12. Will prepare and implement its own internal guidelines and identification cards. Will produce identification cards and issue to each member. Will describe the use of the identification card in its internal guidelines.
13. Will undertake as well as delegate matters for the benefit of the Association in accordance with the Bylaws.
14. Will present a report to the General Assembly twice a year.
15. Will select a Legal Advisor.

Article 20: Meetings of the Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee will meet at least once a month.
2. When urgent matters arise, the Executive Committee may call a meeting.
3. The presence of more than half of the members during a meeting of the Executive Committee will constitute a quorum, and it will pass decisions.

Article 21: Members of the Executive Committee

1. Chairperson
2. Vice Chairperson
3. Secretary
4. Vice Secretary
5. Finance Officer
6. Accountant
7. Public Relations Officer

Article 22: Functions of the Executive Committee

1. The Chairperson

- A. Will administer and manage the Association under the guidance of the General Assembly.
- B. Will chair meetings on which issues are presented to the General Assembly, as well as meetings of the Executive Committee.
- C. Will represent the Association on any matter pertaining to the Bylaws, as well as on guidelines issued by the General Assembly and the Executive Committee.
- D. Will sign checks along with the Association's Accountant, and in the absence of the Accountant, will sign along with the Vice Chairperson.
- E. Will ensure that the decisions of the General Assembly and the Executive Committee are properly enforced.
- F. Will provide guidelines to members of the Executive Committee and monitor their work.

2. The Vice chairperson

- A. Will serve as the assistant of the Chairperson.
- B. Will substitute the Chairperson in his/her absence or when he/she is unable to perform his/her duties.
- C. Will serve as the Chair of subcommittees of the Recruitment and Executive committees.
- D. Will coordinate and chair meetings with the Church's Administrative Board.
- E. Will maintain a register with the names and addresses of members, and monitor and

record updates.

3. The Secretary

- A. Will undertake the Association's clerical work.
- B. Will prepare the Executive Committee's meeting agendas to be presented to the General Assembly.
- C. Will make announcements of meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Committee. Will notify the time and place of the meeting to the concerned members and committees. Will mail meeting notice letters along with a document bearing the power of attorney three weeks in advance.
- D. Will record and properly file minutes during meetings of the General Assembly as well as meetings of the Executive Committee.
- E. Will carefully handle the Association's seal, and verify its proper use.
- F. Will prepare drafts of reports prepared bi-annually in consultation with the Chairperson.
- G. Will perform other tasks assigned by the Executive Committee or the Chairperson.

4. The Vice Secretary

Reports to the Chairperson, and

- A. Will assist the Secretary with properly performing the duties assigned to him/her by the Bylaws.
- B. Will substitute and undertake the duties of the Secretary in his/her absence.

5. The Finance Officer

- A. Will carefully manage the Association's accounts and financial documents.
- B. Will prepare income and expense statements.
- C. Will properly file documents bearing the Association's finances and assets.
- D. Will prepare financial reports every month in coordination with the Accountant.

6. The Accountant

- A. Will sign checks along with either the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson.
- B. Will verify that the monthly membership fees and other income of the Association are collected via receipt in accordance with the Bylaws.
- C. Will collect all of the Association's cash through receipts and present the original to the payer, the second copy will be filed along with the income and expense ledger, and the third copy will be left on the pad and presented to the Financial Controller and Auditor upon request.
- D. Will deposit the cash received on behalf of the Association in the bank account under the Association's name within two days.
- E. Will record petty cash budget for various and urgent expenses on a special ledger. Will properly organize and file receipts from petty cash expenditures and present to the Chairperson, the Financial Officer and the Auditor when requested. Will adhere to the guidelines on handling petty cash set by the Executive Committee in its internal guidelines.
- F. Will present a report on activities undertaken by him/her as an accountant as well as the financial status of the Association when requested by the General Assembly, the Executive Committee, the Chairperson as well as the Financial Officer.

7. The Public Relations Head

- A. Will coordinate the activities of members.
- B. Will coordinate members to attend the funeral and visit the family when a member dies, or a member is notified of the loss of a family member, and will announce through communication channels.
- C. Will serve as the spokesperson of the Association.
- D. Will perform his/her duties in close collaboration with the Vice Chairperson.
- E. Will record and store the Association's assets. Will record the items used on a daily basis and will ensure that missing items are purchased and replaced. Will sell unwanted items and record as the Association's income.

Article 23: Special Subcommittees on Recruitment and Coordination

1. Will first adequately explain the Association's purpose and internal regulations, and confirm that he/she is a member of the Church in accordance with the Bylaws, and will then have the individual that meets the prerequisites to become a member of Association complete the registration form, give him/her a copy of the Association's Bylaws and direct him/her to the Association's Accountant along with the registration form.
2. Depending on the need, will advise the Association's Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Executive Committee when requested for advice regarding matters pertaining to the Association.
3. Will write and present to the Executive Committee ideas that will improve the Association and strengthen its organization in the future, and will report to the Vice Chairperson.

Article 24: Legal Advisor

1. Will review all relevant state and federal laws and ensure the Association's proper legal registration so that it has a legal status.

2. Will review the Association's Bylaws are based on administrative regulations, and propose an amendment to the Executive Committee if any are found to be unfit.
3. When the Association wants to purchase a fixed asset, he/she will review and approve the legality of the transaction's contract.
4. If the association is indicted by any party, he/she will recommend a lawyer to represent the Association.
5. If the Executive Committee calls for a meeting requesting legal advice on some matters, he/she will attend and offer ideas.
6. Will ensure that all of the Association's activities are conducted in accordance with the law.
7. Will review and confirm that the decisions passed are implemented in a manner that doesn't violate the integrity of the Association as well as its members.

Article 25: Auditor or Internal Controller

The Auditor or Internal Controller will report to the General Assembly, and

1. Will verify that the Association's income and expenses are properly recorded, and that any accounting activity is conducted in accordance with these Bylaws.
2. Will review the Association's income and expenditure statement and present to the General Assembly twice a year.
3. Upon confirming that members of the Executive Committee assigned to their respective posts aren't fulfilling their responsibilities, he/she will first file a report to the Executive Committee. If he/she is not satisfied with the actions taken by the Executive Committee, he/she will seek appropriate action by presenting the matter to the General Assembly.
4. Will ensure that the Association's Bylaws are properly implemented. If there are gaps, he/she will present to the General Assembly and make amendments.

Section 3: Conclusion

Article 26: Terms of Service of the Executive Committee

1. The term of service for members of the Executive Committee shall be three years.
2. A member that has completed his/her service term is eligible for reelection. However, he/she cannot serve for more than two consecutive terms.
3. During the election of the Executive Committee, two of its members will remain on their posts and only five new members will be elected. Members of the Executive Committee who have served two consecutive terms cannot be elected for a third term.

Article 27: The Association's Tenure and Rules

1. The Association was established for an indefinite period.
2. The Association is a legal entity, and shall undertake legal action regarding all matters concerning the Association in accordance with these Bylaws.

Article 28: Service Fees

The elected officials of the Association will not be paid for their services.

Article 29: Amendments

These Bylaws can be amended if endorsed by fifty one percent of all members.

Article 30: Dissolution of the Association

The association can only be dissolved if three-fourth of its members support the decision during a meeting of the General Assembly. If the association is dissolved, its assets and cash will be transferred to Debre Genet Medhane Alem Church.

Article 31: Date of Ratification of the Bylaws

The General Assembly of the Debre Genet Medhane Alem Mutual Aid Association has reviewed and unanimously ratified the Bylaws presented by the Bylaws Amendment Taskforce on this day, May 3, 2015, at Debre Genet Medhane Alem Church, Temple Hills, Prince George County, Maryland.

Article 32: Legal Writing

The legally valid version of the Bylaws of the Debre Genet Medhane Alem Church Mutual Aid Association shall be the English version; the Amharic version, however, shall remain its translation.

SEAL