



**VOICE OF GRACE PARISH**

**BECOMING A MEMBER**

**OF**

**CELESTIAL CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**(The Membership Booklet)**

## Foreword

This course is designed for two groups of persons (Christians): those desiring to become members of the church, and those who are already members but are desiring a deeper understanding of their church membership. Three tools are essential to a profitable study of this course:

1. A desire for spiritual enlightenment and enrichment
2. A receptive heart and mind
3. Last, and most important of all, the Bible. Look up the Scripture references and make a study, from the standpoint of the Bible, of the various subjects considered.

## I. THE BELIEF

A. In becoming a member of Celestial Church of Christ, you must first and foremost have the basic understanding of what it means to be a Christian and more importantly be an intentional follower of Christ.

- Did you receive Christ into your life? (*Romans 10: 9; John 3:1-7*) According to His promise in *Revelation 3:20*, where is Christ right now in relation to you? Christ said that He would come into your life, have you let Him in? YES?
- If YES, then here is your pledge;  
**The Apostle's Creed**  
I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven and seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence, He shall come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost  
The Celestial Church of Christ.  
The Communion of Saints,  
The Forgiveness of sins,  
The Resurrection of the body,  
And Life everlasting.  
Amen.

B. The moment that you received Christ by faith, as an act of the will, many things happened, including the following:

1. Your sins were forgiven (*Colossians 1:14, Titus3:3-7* )
2. You became a child of God (*John 1:12, Romans 8:14-17*).
3. You on track to receive eternal life (*John 5:24, 2 Corinthians 5:17*).
4. You can now began in you spiritual journey and here is the church to guide you.

## II. THE FELLOWSHIP

God's Word instructs us not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together" (*Hebrews 10:25*). Several logs burn brightly and effectively together; but put one aside on the cold grate and the fire goes out; so it is with your relationship with other Christians especially at church. The Church is the House of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Tim. 3:15.

### A. THE CHURCH

- ***HISTORY***

The name of the Church is **Celestial Church of Christ USA Inc.** Celestial Church of Christ U.S.A Diocese is a part of one spiritual, worldwide, united, indivisible Holy Church, which came into existence by DIVINE ORDER on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1947, in Porto-Novo, Dahomey now Republic of Benin, through the founder of the Church. The Reverend, Pastor, Prophet, Founder Samuel Bilehou Joseph Oshoffa. The Church is a Diocese of Celestial Church of Christ Worldwide with International Headquarters at the Mission House, Ketu, Lagos State Nigeria and the world HQ at Imeko City Ogun State, Nigeria. It is a prophetic/Spiritual Pentecostal Church

- ***DIVINE ORDER***

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1947, in the deep mystery of divine appearance during prayer, of the winged Angel clothed in intense light, word came from God to the Founder, S.B.J. Oshoffa saying "Luli (meaning grace), it is the wish of God to send you on a divine errand of preaching to the world. There are many nominal Christians who, when they are confronted by difficulties and problems of this world, run after fetish priests and other powers of darkness for all kinds of assistance. Consequently, on their death, they cannot see Christ because by their actions, Satan has left his spiritual mark on them. To assist you in your work so that men may listen to and follow you, miraculous works of Holy Divine healing will be carried out by you and in the name of Jesus Christ. These works of divine healing and God's spiritual mark on you will testify to the fact that God sent you." Thus was born to the entire world **CELESTIAL CHURCH OF CHRIST.**

The name of the Church came by divine revelation through **MR. ALEXANDER YANGA**, who was at that time undergoing spiritual healing at the residence of the Pastor Founder and who was held in trance for seven days. On the seventh day, while still in trance, he asked for a piece of chalk and wrote the name of the church on the wall thus: "**EGLISE DU CHRISTIANISME CELESTE**" meaning "Celestial Church of Christ." For the first five years, the founder was addressed "**EVANGELIST**" until it was revealed and he was permitted by the

DIVINE ORDER to use the name “**EPASTORAL**” in angelic language which was also translated for him as the word “**PASTOR**”.

Also, all the hymns used in worship service in Celestial Church of Christ have been given directly by heaven through the spirit of prophets and prophetesses. Some of the songs are in angelic language.

The pastor is the Head of the church in all matters and he is represented at the Parish level by the Shepherd, at the district level by the District supervisor, at the regional level, by the Regional Head, and at the diocesan level by the Head of diocese.

The first Pastor of the Church was the Founder, Rev., Pastor, and Prophet Samuel Bilehou Oshoffa. Through him, the Lord Jesus Christ raised a number of dead, restored a number of blind, deaf, and dumb. He was a great prophet of our time. He was translated at the age of 76 (in 1985) after leading the church for 38 years.

The succeeding pastor was Rt. Rev. Alexander Abiodun Bada. He also departed at the age of 70 (in 2000) after leading the church for 15 years.

The succeeding Pastor – the third was Rt. Rev. Philip H Ajose. He led the church for only a few months and departed at the age of 69 in 2001. The current Pastor is Rev. Emmanuel Mobiyina Oshoffa.

The Pastor is assisted in his administration by:

- The Board of Trustees.
- The Pastor in Council members.
- Staff of the International HQ.
- The Head of Dioceses, Regional Heads, Circuit heads, District heads, Zonal Heads, and shepherds.

At the Parish Level, the shepherd is assisted in the administration of the Parish by the Parochial Committee.

## **B. THE PARISH**

- ***History***

Celestial Church of Christ Voice of Grace was given through divine inspiration and vision. The parish was born out of an irrevocable determination to pursue nothing else but the mind of God and the heart of His Son Jesus Christ; a church with its face to the world, loving others unconditionally regardless of culture, background or attainment; pouring itself out in a life of selfless service, offering security and hope to a frightened and helpless world. The whole congregation is presented as a single family united in the oneness of the Holy Trinity as a real, true and unpoluted agent of Christ on earth.

The Parish started in August 1997 at 36 Stratford Ave Ewing, NJ 08618. And steadily, it grew from a single family to four families within a month, then six families within six month, and to seven families before Dec. 31 1997.

In view of space constraints, the parish moved to 46 Weber Ave. Ewing, NJ 08638 on a rental basis in February 1998 before finally obtaining the township zoning approval and C of O in 1999. By June 29 2000, the property was fully acquired by God for the Church.

The Parish is a single family church united in divine love, peace, oneness of spirit, total humility, an ideal of selfless service and complete dedication to the core values of Celestial Church of Christ as enshrined within the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- ***VISION OF THE CHURCH***

To evangelize the world through the proclamation of the Word –the Good News of the Messiah Jesus Christ, and of the Kingdom of God; in the mighty name of Jesus Christ, proclaiming deliverance to those bound by the shackles of Satan, healing the brokenhearted, the sick, the infirmed, restoring hope to the hopeless and those who are bound, while reinforcing the faith of all –both feeble and strong in the unfailing righteousness and faithfulness of God Almighty and Jesus Christ, the Lord.& Savior.

- ***PRIMARY MISSION***

1. To worship God Almighty in holiness and reverence
2. To preach the good news of the Messiah –Jesus Christ and the imminent Kingdom of God through evangelism, Bible classes, Bible lectures, organized spiritual forum, print and electronic media.
3. To prepare believers for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. To work for the unity of all Christians
5. To organize and run schools, colleges, Seminaries, and Research centers.
6. Inculcation and restoration of Christian values into home/families, to encourage family cohesion, peace and stability in homes, neighborhoods and nations through prayers, counseling and spiritual ministrations
7. Organize charities and relief operations.
8. Promote crime free and drug free environments.

### III. ORDINANCES

- **Celestial Paraphernalia.**

#### *The Altar*

##### Configuration of the Altar.

- A big Cross behind the seven candle holder, epitomizing the power of the Lord we worship, and the redemptive Instrument of our Lord Jesus Christ. *1Cor. 1:18.*
- The golden seven candle holder. The seven burning candle lights represent the seven spirits of the living God; the stars and the glory of the entire seven foundational churches of the world. *Rev. 1:12.*
- Seven burning lamps: *Rev 4:5*
- Two flower vessels, one on the right and the other on the left side of the seven candle holder representing the two anointed. *Zech. 4: 1-14, Rev.11*
- A lantern to the left side of the altar burning always. *Ex 27:20 Lev.24:1-4*
- Altar water on the right and holy oil of anointing on the left side of the altar.

Every little thing in the sanctuary from the altar all the way to the very entrance is inspired by the very spirit of God and in essence replicates the meeting place of saints in heaven.

#### *The Materials*

- Anointing Oil & Incense: *Exodus. 30: 22-30*
- Perfume usage in the Sanctuary: *Exodus. 30: 34-38*
- Incense: *Rev. 8: 3-5; Ex. 30*
- Holy Water - *Numbers 8:6-7;*

#### *The Regalia (Divine decree to the Pastor, Prophet & Founder – mirror image of the dressing code of the heavenly Celestial Church)*

##### **Called SU-TA-NA**

- Walking Bare-feet: *(as ordained by the Holy Spirit) Exod 3:5, Joshua 5:13-15*
- Wearing White Garment: *Rev 7: 9-14, Rev 19:8*
- The loin - *Daniel 10:5, Rev. 1:13*
- All women must cover their heads in the sanctuary. *1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11: 3-16*

#### IV. WORSHIP SERVICE

The mode of worship in celestial church of Christ is a mirror image of that in Heaven and it was given through revelation to the Pastor Founder of the Church.

- **Services**

Worship Services are observed during the following hours and periods:

Day	Time	Purpose
Wednesday	9.00am –10.00am	For all those seeking special favor from the Lord
Wednesday	6.00pm – 7.30pm	Mercy day regular worship Service
Friday	6.00pm – 7.30pm	Power day regular worship Service
Sunday	9.00am - 9.45am	Bible Class and Praise Worship
Sunday	10.00am - 1.00pm	Sabbath day regular worship Service
1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday	12.00am -1.30am	1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month- New Moon Service.

Other Special Services recognized/performed in Celestial Church of Christ Include;

**Night Vigil Service**

**Christmas Eve Service** (Celebration of the birth of the Lord and Savior)

**New Year Eve Service**

**Palm Sunday Service** (Use of Palm-fronds, chanting Hosanna also): John 12:12-19

**Holy Thursday: Service** of the washing of the feet and holy Communion

**Good Friday Service:** Observing all hours of the Cross with prayer and meditation.

**Easter Sunday Service:** Celebration of Jesus Christ resurrection.

**Harvest Celebration Service** (Two annually, /juvenile and Adult celebrations) Ex. 34:22

**Naming Ceremony Service** *Luke 2: 21-40.*

**Burial Service** - (Honoring the dead) ( never held within church premises)

- **Sunday Service Procession**

- Begins with all service attendees queued outside the sanctuary.
- The Service Conductor offers up the service in prayer.
- Then the processional hymn is played and all proceed into the sanctuary.
- Everyone remains standing until
  - The Seven Candles on the Altar are lit.
  - The Inner Altar is sanctified
- At this point, everyone Kneels
- At the jingle of the Bell, the whole congregation bows down saying *Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God of Hosts*
- Then a cyclical session of Psalm recitations, Prayer and Hymns follow
- Everyone is then seated and the following ensues
  - Two Bible readings
  - Announcements
  - Sermon
- Then we proceed to Collections and Tithe offering

- Once that is completed, all those offering thanks bring their offering trays before the Church Levites in dancing and singing beginning from the back of the sanctuary.
- Then the closing hymn and prayers are offered and the service is brought to an end with all attendees queuing out of the Sanctuary.
- **Reasons behind some of the Service customs**
  - Bowing down at the jingle of the Bell saying  
**Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God of Hosts** - *Is. 6: 1-3; Rev 4 8*
  - CCC Prayer Key (divinely given through the holy spirit) Starting out with  
*Jehovah, Jesus Christ, Holy Michael*  
**Jehovah:** *Exodus 6:3*  
**Jesus Christ:** *Ph 2:10, John 14: 12-14*  
**Holy Michael:** *Daniel 12:1, Zach 4:1-3 & 13*
  - Bowing Down when Praying: ( mirror image of heavenly format- given through the Holy Spirit) *Isaiah 6:1-3, Rev. 4: 8-11*
  - Chants
    - **Halleluiah** – Meaning “Praise the Lord” *Rev 19: 6*
    - **Hosanna** – Meaning please save “A Cry of Praise” *Matt 21; 1-17*
    - **Ebenezer**- Meaning “Rock of my Help” *1 Samuel 7:12.*

## V. Sacraments, Doctrines and Tenets

### Sacraments

#### *Holy Communion*

*John 6: 53-54* - Then Jesus Christ said unto them, “Verily, verily I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the son of man, and ye drink of His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

The application of the sacred bread represents the body of Christ given to believers and the drink of the fruit of the vine represents the new testament in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. *1 Cor. 11: 22-26*. *Luke 22:15-20*. It is a divine injunction for Christians to observe. Only those who are already baptized in Celestial Church of Christ are eligible.

#### *Feast of the washing of the feet.*

This is an exercise that took place on the Holy Thursday – the day preceding the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was to teach and inculcate into the disciples the spirit of service and humility.

*John 13: 8* Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.”

Read *John 13: 3- 17* for complete message.

#### *Baptism*

You must have spent at least one year in the Church and exhibited a deep sense of commitment in your worship of God Almighty, in your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your only Lord and Savior, and in your believe in the doctrines and ordinance of Celestial Church of Christ, before you can be considered qualified for baptism into Christ Jesus in this Church.

Baptism in Celestial Church of Christ is by total emersion in the river

Baptism is a process of regeneration, a spiritual birth out of the flesh into the spirit of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God through faith in the dead and resurrection of Jesus Christ. *1 Peter 3: 21*.

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” *John 3:5*.

After you have met the previously mentioned requirements, you will be put through a Baptismal course elaborating on the full significance of your getting baptized.

## *Anointment*

You must have spent at least one year in the Church and demonstrated a deep sense of commitment in your worship of God Almighty, in your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your only Lord and Savior, and in your believe in the doctrines and ordinances of Celestial Church of Christ, before you can be considered qualified for baptism into Christ Jesus in this Church.

After Baptism, depending on the effectiveness of your activities and participation in advancing the progress of the Church, you may be recommended to the Pastor of the Church for anointment, by the Shepherd of the Parish.

Anointment is a holy consecration, and spiritual empowerment to enable you to minister in the house of the Lord. It is a spiritual elevation to enable you assist the Shepherd in carrying out assigned spiritual responsibilities within the House of Worship. Exod. 40:13. You should wait until you are so empowered through this spiritual process of anointment before you could attempt to participate in any serious spiritual assignment. Act 1:8. "For you are fighting not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12.

As you are elevated from one rank to another, you will be required to go through thorough training and meet several requirements that will properly prepare you for the duties you will be undertaking

## *Doctrines*

### *New Members*

New members shall normally, prior to admission as worshippers, undergo sanctification with a pail of water, candle, sponge, and soap for spiritual purification in the church. The prayer of sanctification shall be conducted by the Pastor's representative in charge of the Parish or by his appointee *Ex. 30:17-21*

### *Women on their Flow*

Female members cannot come into the Church when they are in their monthly flower period. They shall be free to return after sanctification on the eighth day. *Lev. 15:19, 28-30.*

### *Women after Child Birth*

After delivery of a new baby, the mother shall not return to the church with the baby until after the period of purification which is the 40<sup>th</sup> day after delivery. *Lev 12: 1-4; Luke 2:22.*

Other doctrines are practiced by the church to keep the spirit and instruments of God ever present in our daily lives such as Home Sanctification, Vehicle Sanctification and different types of Spiritual Work and Prayers as the spirit of the Lord directs.

## Tenets

The following are **prohibited** and regarded as **Spiritually retrogressive** for Celestians.

- Drinking of alcoholic beverages
- Smoking of tobacco products.

## VI. SANCTUARY CODE

*Leviticus 26:2* states “Ye shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.” *Habakkuk 2:20* also re-affirms: “But the Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silent before Him”.

The following standard of behavior and practice shall strictly be observed in the Sanctuary of God. Every worshipper in the parish must endeavor to be a model of spiritual excellence, and Worship service shall reflect the solemnity of God’s holiness and orderliness. God is not an author of confusion.

### Spiritual Code of Conduct.

1. Upon entering the church, at all times, but especially during Services, an individual should remember that he or she is in the *House of God*. Reverence and good manners are required so as not to disturb those who are already engaged in prayer and worship but, even more importantly, as an expression of sincere faith and awareness of the presence of the Lord.
2. You must be properly dressed without any loose button before coming into the Sanctuary otherwise the warden will politely ask you to do it right.
3. All must not wear transparent or tight regalia (Sutana) to the church. It is ungodly. Therefore, appropriate and respectful clothing should be worn at all times. We do this not to impress each other but to show our Lord that we offer our best to Him, for He deserves only the best we have..
4. The Altar
  - a. No Male not yet anointed is allowed into the altar.
  - b. No female shall under any circumstance go beyond the threshold close to the altar and no female shall be allowed to touch the sacred items such as sanctification water vessel, the in- censer or the Cross in the alter.
5. Women who are still on their flow must of necessity, go through sanctification on the eighth day of the commencement of their cycle. If their flow exceeds seven days then they must add additional one day after the end of the flow before they can come to the church for sanctification. Please keep off the environment of the church for clear seven days.
6. Children should be kept effectively under control by their parents during service. No child shall be allowed to be running up and down the sanctuary of God. Such children will be taken out and disciplined by the warden.

7. No matter your status, you are not allowed to move out or in during prayer sessions unless your child is disturbing the solemnity of the service. No walking during prayer sessions at all.
8. Three elders prayer in the church is reserved for those who are anointed, and should progress between them in ascending order.
9. There is no singing when you are asked to pray.
10. Musical instruments used for the glory of God shall remain out of bound to children. No child shall be allowed to play with any musical instruments
11. There shall be passable column between male and female members when thanks-offerings are being brought before the Lord.
12. No food except water or fruit shall be taken in the sanctuary. No such thing should happen in the altar. If you need to drink or eat fruit please get out of the altar of God.
13. No chewing of gum under any circumstance in the Sanctuary of God
14. All use of Cell Phones are prohibited in the Sanctuary
15. All jokes shall strictly be reserved to the end of the Service and all spiritual assignments for the day. Moreover, jokes should be restrained and confined to within Christian discipline.
16. There is no talking or discussion when the Service is in session. No irrelevant conversations should take place either in the Altar or in any other part of the Sanctuary.
17. There can be no interruption or interjection during the flow of Worship Service. The only period for interjection or interruption, if it is compelling is during the time of announcement, thanks offering or after the Service. This is crucial.
18. Members can be allowed in, during Sermon by the warden or the preacher.
19. Tattoos are not encouraged; ear-ring and weaving of hair on men are also to be discouraged
20. In-fighting for whatever reason is prohibited and employment of unpolished words is un-acceptable in the sanctuary of God.
21. Complete reverence for the presence of God in the sanctuary is a MUST.

May the good Lord continue to guide and bless your household as you endeavor to make His Holy Sanctuary a place of reverence, honor and fear. He is Almighty God

## **VII. CONCLUSION...**

We would now like to welcome you to the family of Celestial Church of Christ. "You are a member of God's very own family and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." *Ephesians 2.19*

We hope the good Lord who has called you into this fold neither desert nor forsake you. And as you tread on through the corridors of life now armed with the gift bestowed upon you by God through this church, remember that; "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Amen