

**Bylaws of Laurelglen Bible Church
(Revised 6/12/2011)**

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this church shall be "Laurelglen Bible Church," hereafter referred to as "the church."

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE OF BYLAWS AND CHURCH

- A. It shall be the purpose of these Bylaws to regulate the functions and the administration of Laurelglen Bible Church. All provisions of the Bylaws shall conform to the principles and policies expressed in the Articles of Incorporation.
- B. Further, the purpose of the church is to develop fully committed followers of Jesus Christ by proclaiming His gospel through its members; by providing for corporate worship, fellowship, training, witness, and service; by providing for a worship center in the city of Bakersfield for those of like mind and faith where they may assemble for regular as well as special meetings; by providing Christian training for all ages to strengthen the faith of the saints and bring them to maturity; by serving as a unifying force for evangelizing the unchurched and unsaved with whom we come into contact, and by promoting and fostering the spirit of witness and outreach at home and abroad; by collecting and maintaining funds, receiving gifts, bequests and donations and dispersing them for purposes of operating and supporting the various activities of the church. All meetings and gatherings of the church shall serve to glorify God, and to bring the saints to maturity and/or help those who do not know Christ to acknowledge Him as Savior.
- C. These Bylaws may be amended, modified, or rescinded, or new Bylaws may be adopted at any regular or special meeting of the membership (see Article VI).

ARTICLE III - AFFILIATION

Laurelglen Bible Church is a member of the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and thereby a member of the United States Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. The church, though autonomous as to local matters, will give moral and material support to the projects of the above mentioned conferences. All articles of these bylaws shall be in accord with the Bylaws and Articles of Faith of the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and of the U. S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

ARTICLE IV - CONFESSION OF FAITH

The following statement shall serve as the foundational doctrinal statement of the church (see Appendix 2 for the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith).

We Believe

- A. That God is One Divine Being, manifest in three Persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- B. That the Bible is God's infallible Word, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit; it is the only basis and adequate guide for Christian faith, life and service.
- C. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God; He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed miracles, died for the sins of the world, was raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, is now at the throne of God, and He will personally return to earth.
- D. That man was created by God in His image but because of sin he is lost and destined for judgment.
- E. That a person is saved from his sin by believing in Jesus Christ and receiving Him as personal Lord and Savior.
- F. That Christians should make a public demonstration of their commitment to Jesus Christ through baptism.
- G. That the church is the extended body of Christ, and seeks to live in obedience to God's Word.
- H. That observance of the Lord's Supper reminds believers of, and demonstrates the sacrificial death of, Jesus Christ.
- I. That every Christian is a disciple of Jesus and is a steward of life—talent, time and treasure.
- J. That loyalty to Jesus Christ takes priority to any other person or organization.
- K. That the Christian experience is one of separation from worldliness and ungodliness to Christ.
- L. That the mission of the church is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ—the Gospel—to others in all the world.
- M. That when the Lord returns, the living believers will be raptured, and the dead in Christ will be resurrected to eternity with Christ.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Admission of Members

- A. By testimony: Any person who is not a member of another Mennonite Brethren Church but who upon profession of faith has been baptized may, if he accepts the statement of faith, become a member of this church after attending membership classes and giving a satisfactory personal testimony to the church or a representative group thereof. (See Appendix I – "Policy Regarding the Reception of Non-Immersioned Believers as Members of Laurelglen Bible Church")

- B. By baptism: Any person who confesses personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, gives evidence of the new birth in his conduct, and by testimony before the statement of faith of this church, shall, after attending membership classes and after baptism by immersion, be accepted as a member of this church.
- C. By letter: Any member of a Mennonite Brethren Church may become a member of this church upon presentation of a letter of recommendation from said church and after attending membership classes and after giving a personal testimony before the church members or a group representative thereof.
- D. Associate Membership: Associate membership may be extended by approval of the Lay Elder Board to current members for special reasons, such as students of colleges or seminaries who wish to retain their membership in their home church, non-local missionaries, etc.

Section 2 - Transfer or Termination of Membership

- A. Letter of transfer: A member, when moving to another locality where there is a Mennonite Brethren Church, may request a letter of transfer to that church.
- B. Letter of certification: If a member desires to unite with another evangelical church, the church may issue a statement certifying his good standing in the church and recommending him for fellowship upon request.
- C. Termination of membership: Any member who brings reproach upon the name of Christ or the church or violates the statement of faith shall be dealt within the following general pattern:

Every effort shall be made to correct such a member in the spirit of love, (Gal. 6:1-2, Matthew 18:15-17) for the purpose of restoration to full fellowship and love. If such a member refuses to be corrected, the pattern of discipline, suggested in II Thess. 3:14-15, and I Cor. 5:11-13 shall be followed.
- D. Withdrawal from membership: Any member may withdraw from membership by submitting a written notice of withdrawal to the Lay Elder Board.

Article VI - Church Government

Section 1 - General

- A. The church is organized under the headship of Jesus Christ, with leadership entrusted to a team of Pastoral and Lay Elders.
- B. Decisions made by vote of the membership include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Approval of the annual church budget.
 - 2. Hiring of pastors.
 - 3. Affirmation of Lay Elders.
 - 4. Changes to these Bylaws.
 - 5. Purchase or sale of land and facilities.

Section 2 - Membership Meetings

- A. A Membership Meeting shall be held three times a year, including an Annual Membership Meeting held in the first quarter of the fiscal year.
- B. The budget is to be adopted at the Annual Membership Meeting.
- C. Special Membership Meetings may be called by the Lay Elder Board.
- D. The dates and agendas of the Membership Meetings shall be published or announced not less than two weeks prior to those meetings.

Section 3 - Procedures

- A. A quorum at all Membership Meetings shall be the members in attendance.
- B. Roberts' Rules of Order will generally be observed unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws or by the membership.
- C. Amendments to church Bylaws, rules or resolutions previously adopted shall require an approval of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast of the members in attendance at the Membership Meeting unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws.
- D. Recommendations shall be decided by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast of the members in attendance unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws.
- E. Minimum voting age at Membership Meetings shall be 16 years.
- F. Non-members are permitted to attend Membership Meetings, but are not permitted to address the meeting or cast votes. The Moderator may call an "in camera" session (a closed session not open to non-members) when advisable.

Article VII - Church Leadership

Section 1 - General

- A. The church shall be led by a team of Biblically discerned and qualified men who have been called to such ministry and affirmed by the membership to serve the following functions:
 - 1. Oversight and administration (managing the affairs of the church) (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24)
 - 2. Pastoral care (shepherding; leading and guarding the flock) (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2) and prayer (Acts 6:4; James 5:14-15)
 - 3. Preaching, teaching, and admonition (guarding the truth) (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Thess. 5:12)
- B. While all elders are positionally equal, they are functionally diverse, as represented by the following distinctions:
 - 1. The Lead Pastor leads the strategic planning process, guiding and serving as the liaison between the Pastoral Elders and the Lay Elders.
 - 2. Pastoral Elders lead and manage various major areas of church ministry.

3. Lay Elders lead through ensuring that ministry structures and plans are consistent with the mission, core values and policies of the church.

Section 2 - Qualifications of Elders

- A. Elder candidates shall meet the Biblical qualifications for church leadership (1 Timothy 3; Titus 2).
- B. Elder candidates shall agree to work in harmony with the purpose and program of the church (Titus 1, 1 Timothy 3, Acts 6).
- C. Lay Elder candidates shall be actively involved members in good standing of the church for a minimum of one year preceding affirmation.

Section 3 - Pastoral Elders

- A. Organization
 1. The Lead and Associate Pastors (Pastoral Elders) serve alongside the Lay Elder Board as part of the church's leadership team.
 2. The Lead Pastor is the spiritual leader of the church, working in partnership with all other elders. He shall be the primary pastor-teacher of the church and the official representative of the church.
 3. The Associate Pastors act as leaders of their particular ministry areas, submitting to the supervision of the Lead Pastor.
- B. Responsibilities
 1. The Pastoral Elders are responsible for providing direction and oversight to their ministry areas as defined by their ministry descriptions.
 2. The Pastoral Elders also serve as co-shepherds of our church body and participate in strategic planning of the broader ministries of the church as a whole.
 3. The Pastoral Elders are responsible for adhering to and implementing church policy as they manage their individual ministries.
- C. Calling Pastors
 1. When a Pastoral Elder vacancy occurs, the church shall set aside time for prayer and seeking the will of God in the matter.
 2. The Lay Elder Board shall be responsible to establish a Pastor Search Team (PST). PST members shall be actively involved members in good standing of the church for a minimum of one year prior to serving on the PST. PST members may be added by the Lay Elder Board as deemed appropriate.
 3. The PST shall be responsible for interviewing and selecting candidates to be presented to the Lay Elder Board for evaluation and possible recommendation to the church at a Membership Meeting.
 4. Only one candidate shall be recommended to the church at any one time.

5. A candidate must receive at least three fourths (3/4) majority of the votes cast of the members in attendance at a Membership Meeting in order to be called as a Pastoral Elder.
 6. A Pastoral Elder shall be called for an indefinite period of time.
- D. Termination of Service—Because the church is an “at will” employer, a Pastoral Elder may be terminated by the Lay Elder Board or may resign at any time without prior notice. Whenever possible, however, the church will provide two months notice of termination. Likewise, the church requests Pastoral Elders to provide at least two months notice of resignation if possible.

Section 4 - Lay Elders (Lay Elder Board)

A. Organization

1. The Lay Elder Board shall normally consist of no fewer than five (5) and no more than nine (9) members. The Lead Pastor is a member of the Board throughout his tenure as Lead Pastor.
2. The Lay Elder Board may gather for monthly meetings. It is expected that members of this board will attend a minimum of 75% of its scheduled meetings each year.
3. The Chairman of the Lay Elder Board shall be elected annually by the Board. The Chairman shall serve as Church Moderator and be responsible for scheduling and presiding at Lay Elder Board and Membership Meetings, and other special meetings as directed by the Lay Elder Board.
4. Lay Elder Board meetings are open to church members by prior arrangement with the Chairman.
5. The Lay Elder Board shall elect annually one of its members to be the Vice-Chairman to act in the absence of the Chairman.
6. The Lay Elder Board shall elect annually one of its members to be the Secretary. The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all Lay Elder Board and Membership Meetings and present them at the meetings. The Secretary shall conduct official correspondence for the church as directed by the Lay Elder Board.
7. Decisions by and recommendations from the Lay Elder Board shall be by consensus (hereby defined as “general assent”) or by a 75% minimum vote.

B. Responsibilities

1. The Lay Elder Board serves alongside the Pastoral Elders as part of the church’s primary leadership team.
2. The Lay Elder Board works with the Pastoral Elders to define the mission, vision, and major policies of the church.
3. The Lay Elder Board serves as the church’s Board of Directors for legal purposes.

4. The Lay Elder Board is responsible to require accountability from and provide feedback to the Pastoral Elders regarding implementation of the church's policies and management of the church's programs.
 - a. The Lay Elder Board shall review all matters before presentation to the church.
 - b. The Lay Elder Board is responsible to work with Pastoral Elders to ensure that the decisions of the membership are carried out.
 - c. The Lay Elder Board shall consult with the Lead Pastor regularly to review progress toward ministry goals. They may also call upon Pastoral Elders to review progress or concerns in a specific area of ministry.
5. The Lay Elder Board is responsible to provide oversight of personnel issues.
 - a. The Lay Elder Board shall encourage the Pastoral Elders in their ministry and shall stand by to advise and counsel them.
 - b. The Lay Elder Board shall recommend to the membership an annual budget, including staff compensation and allowances.
 - c. The Lay Elder Board is responsible to terminate the employment of any Pastoral Elder when such termination is deemed to be in the best interest of the church.
6. The Lay Elder Board shall prepare the agenda for Membership Meetings.
7. The Lay Elder Board shall be available to assist ministry teams and commissions as requested.
8. The Lay Elder Board shall interpret and execute the Bylaws of the church and recommend amendments to the Bylaws when necessary.

C. Selection of Lay Elders

1. When there are Lay Elder vacancies, the Pastoral Elders and Lay Elder Board shall act as the Lay Elder Discernment Committee (Committee). This Committee shall prayerfully select names of persons to become Lay Elder nominees to fill one or more vacancies at the Committee's discretion.
2. The Committee will inform each nominee of the responsibilities involved as Lay Elder.
3. The Committee shall carefully check the qualifications of each nominee.
4. All nominees will be given time to prayerfully consider their nomination before accepting it.
5. When a nominee accepts the Committee's nomination as Lay Elder they shall be recommended for affirmation as "Candidate for Lay Elder" at a Membership Meeting.
6. Lay Elder candidates shall be affirmed by three fourths (3/4) majority of the votes cast of the members in attendance at the Membership Meeting.
7. The term of office for Lay Elders shall be three years and may be repeated for one additional term by affirmation of the members in attendance at the

Annual Membership Meeting. The newly affirmed Lay Elders take office immediately.

8. After completion of a second three-year term, Lay Elders will vacate the position for at least one year.
- D. Termination of Service—Any Lay Elder may be removed or resign from office at any regular or special meeting of the Board if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent scripture including 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9) after thorough investigation by the Lay Elder Board.

Article VIII - Financial Stewardship

Section 1 - Finances

- A. Financial support of all church operations is predicated on personal, voluntary giving by the members as an act of worship.
- B. A unified budget shall be prepared by the Stewardship Commission for review by the Lay Elder Board. The budget will be presented to the membership at the Annual Membership Meeting for approval. The budget shall include all expenditures of the church except missionary support and expenditures from any designated funds established by the Lay Elder Board. The sum of all appropriations shall not exceed the income which is to be expected.
- C. Funds are to be expended under the direction of the Lay Elder Board. Money shall not be expended, nor liability incurred, beyond the amount appropriated in the budget without specific authorization by the membership.
- D. There shall be a proper accounting of all income and expenditures which is reviewed three times per year by the membership.

Section 2 - Stewardship Commission

- A. Membership
 1. The Stewardship Commission shall normally consist of no fewer than five (5) and no more than nine (9) members of the church.
 2. The Stewardship Commission may, with the approval of the Lay Elder Board, appoint committees as needed to do the work.
- B. Qualifications
 1. Stewardship Commission members shall agree to work in harmony with the purpose and program of the church.
 2. Stewardship Commission members shall be actively involved members in good standing of the church for a minimum of one year prior to serving on the commission.
- C. Organization
 1. The Chairman of the Stewardship Commission shall be elected annually by the Commission members. The Chairman shall be responsible for scheduling

and presiding at the meetings of the Commission and for reporting at Membership Meetings.

2. The Stewardship Commission shall elect one of its members to be the Vice-Chairman to act in the absence of the Chairman.
3. The Secretary of the Stewardship Commission shall be elected annually by the Commission members. The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the commission.

D. Responsibilities

1. The Commission shall be accountable to the Lay Elder Board for the stewardship of church finances and budget. It shall work in close consultation with the Lay Elder Board in such matters as budgeting and major expenditures and buildings. It shall also be the steward of church property, buildings and equipment.
2. The Commission is responsible to correlate its work in harmony with the policies established by the Lay Elder Board. It is to be kept in mind at all times that we are to strive for unity and oneness of purpose; therefore, any policy recommendations shall be brought to the Lay Elder Board so as to correlate all the work as a unified body.
3. Monthly meetings are recommended and it is expected that members of the Stewardship Commission shall attend a minimum of 75% of its scheduled meetings each year.

E. Selection

1. Whenever a vacancy exists, the Stewardship Commission shall prayerfully select a candidate to fill the vacancy.
2. The Lay Elder Board shall be asked to affirm the candidate before the person is asked to serve.
3. All nominees must be given time to prayerfully consider their nomination before accepting it.
4. The term of office for Commission Members shall be three years and may be repeated by affirmation of the Lay Elder Board.
5. After completion of a second three-year term, Commission Members will vacate the position for at least one year.

ARTICLE IX - SEAL

The corporation shall have a common seal as shown below.

Appendix 1

Policy Regarding the Reception of Non-Immersed Believers as Members of Laurelglen Bible Church

We understand the following to be the teachings of the Scriptures regarding believer's baptism.

- A. Baptism by immersion symbolizes the new birth, for in the new birth the believer dies with Christ to sin and is raised with Him to newness of life.
- B. Accordingly, every believer should be baptized by immersion in water as a public declaration of his commitment to Jesus Christ. He should then join a local group of believers, which functions as a local church.
- C. The local church should assemble for worship, prayer, training, and fellowship in order to build itself up in love. In this way each member becomes mature in Christ and prepared to witness to God's saving acts of grace in Jesus Christ to people everywhere.
- D. We, the members of the Laurelglen Bible Church, believe in and practice believer's baptism by immersion according to these teachings.

Romans 6:1-10; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; Ephesians 4:1-16

We recognize that the body of Christ is one, and so we desire fellowship with all believers who follow Jesus Christ in obedience to the Word of God.

- A. Therefore, we as a local church will receive into fellowship believers who have been baptized upon their confession of faith by another mode of water baptism.
- B. In order to maintain and foster unity in doctrine and polity such members shall agree to teach and practice baptism by immersion.
- C. These members shall have all the rights and privileges of full membership in the local church. However, it should be understood that before any person can serve in an ordained capacity, he must be baptized by immersion.
- D. A letter of transfer of membership to another local church must clearly state the mode of baptism, if it is other than immersion.

I Corinthians 12:12-13, John 17:11

Appendix 2

Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith

Laurelglen Bible Church is in agreement with the Confession of Faith of the U.S. and Canadian Conferences of the Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1999 Edition (attached) with the following clarifications:

- A. Regarding Article 2, "Revelation of God," LBC believes that Scripture, being inspired, is without error in the original writings.
- B. Regarding Article 8, "Christian Baptism," LBC views believer's baptism as a requirement for local church membership, but does not grant local church membership status solely on the basis of baptism.
- C. Regarding Article 13, "Love and Nonresistance," LBC practices grace with respect to various convictions regarding giving alternative service during times of war.
- D. Regarding Article 18, "Christ's Final Triumph," LBC would change the second sentence in the statement regarding "Judgment" from "...all those who have rejected Christ will be condemned" to "...all those who have not believed in Christ will be condemned."