

## **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

*Oaks Bible Church*

# **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE I PREAMBLE**

Having been loved by God, saved by the gift of His grace, and created in Christ Jesus for the purposes of worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and evangelism, we join together under the bond of Christ's love seeking to become His fully devoted disciples. We commit ourselves, through common accountability, to know Him more fully, grow in respect to our salvation and go forth in His love, taking His message to our families, community and world.

## **ARTICLE II NAME**

The name of this Corporation is Oaks Bible Church, herein referred to as "Church". It is a California nonprofit religious Corporation with its principal offices in Santa Barbara, California.

## **ARTICLE III PURPOSE**

This corporation is a nonprofit religious corporation and is not organized for the private gain of any person. It is organized under the Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law primarily for religious purposes. The specific purposes for which this corporation is organized are to "to know Jesus, grow in Jesus and go forth in Jesus" with the vision "to grow a loving fellowship of praise, prayer and study of God's Word that we may live out the love of Jesus Christ in our families, community and world".

## **ARTICLE IV STATEMENT OF FAITH**

- (a) **GOD:** We believe in one true and living God, eternally existing in three persons – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and that each has precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections, and that each is worthy of the same worship, trust and obedience.
- (b) **THE FATHER:** We believe in God, the Father, who is an infinite spirit being, perfect in purity, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He is personally involved in the affairs of mankind, saving from sin and spiritual death each who comes to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.
- (c) **JESUS CHRIST:** We believe in the deity and sinless humanity of Jesus Christ our Lord - God the Father's only begotten Son and conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, supernatural miracles and infallible teachings. We believe in His voluntary, substitutionary, atoning death, bodily resurrection from the dead, ascension into Heaven, continual intercession for His followers and His future visible return to earth in power and glory to reign.
- (d) **THE HOLY SPIRIT:** We believe that the person of the Holy Spirit is God's

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- gift to the church, regenerating and indwelling every believer. We believe that the Holy Spirit guides and enables each believing child of God to live a godly and fruitful life. We believe that the Holy Spirit brings the witness of Jesus Christ to the world, convicting of sin, righteousness and judgment.
- (e) **THE BIBLE:** We believe that the Bible is holy, being God-breathed and inspired in the sense that holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the very Word of God to people. We believe the whole Bible in the originals is without error and has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct and when properly understood will always point us to Jesus Christ.
  - (f) **SALVATION:** We believe that every person is a sinner by nature, choice and practice and is, therefore, under condemnation apart from the saving grace of God. We believe that salvation is by faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose death and resurrection is our only hope for regeneration and reconciliation with God. We believe that salvation is the free gift of God, completely apart from any human work, bringing each believer God's eternal life, justification of sin and righteousness in God's eyes.
  - (g) **CHRISTIAN CONDUCT:** We believe that a follower of Jesus Christ should live for the glory of God and the well being of others. We believe that we are to strive to live above reproach in conduct and seek to mature into the image of Christ. We believe that we must trust in God's enabling for growth in these areas of Christian conduct.
  - (h) **THE CHURCH:** We believe in the universal Church, a living spiritual body of which Jesus Christ is the head and all regenerated persons, past and present, are members. We believe in the local Church, consisting of a fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith and associated for worship, fellowship and ministry. We believe that the Church has been commissioned to share the gospel of Jesus Christ to our world.
  - (i) **CHURCH ORDINANCES:** We believe that Jesus Christ has taught and committed two ordinances to the local Church. These ordinances are Baptism and Holy Communion. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, commemorating his already having been baptized (immersed) by the Holy Spirit into the fellowship of the universal church. We believe that Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is the partaking of both bread and the fruit of the vine to commemorate the death of our Lord Jesus and symbolize the need to continually feed upon and commune with Jesus Christ for spiritual nourishment. We believe that these ordinances are to be administered and observed until the return of our Lord.

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- (j) **LAST THINGS:** We believe in the imminent and personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church in the air, to which we should await with hope and preparedness. We believe that death brings the spirits and souls of believers into the immediate presence of God to await the resurrection of their bodies when Christ returns for His own, whereupon soul, spirit and glorified body shall be united with Him forever in glory. We believe that the spirits and souls of the unbelieving will be kept from the glory and presence of the Lord and ultimately be judged and not annihilated but punished in everlasting destruction.

## **ARTICLE V GOVERNMENT**

### ***Section 1 Principles of Governance***

- (a) The Bible is the supreme and ultimate authority in all matters on which it speaks. It shall therefore be utilized to the greatest extent possible in all affairs of the Church; to teach the truths of our faith, to illumine the errors of our ways, to provide correct direction for our lives, and to train us in righteous living (II Timothy 3:16).
- (b) Since Christ is the head of the Church (Colossians 1:18), the Elders govern and lead by following Christ's example and teaching—not by rule of power (1 Peter 5:3). Christ's leadership example is characterized by love (John 15:9-10), by service (John 13:12), and by submission to his Heavenly Father (Philippians 2:5-8).
- (c) Leadership is a shared responsibility and authority. All leaders give and receive equal honor and consideration of opinion—treating each other as those who are uniquely gifted and called by God not just selected to fill a position.
- (d) All leaders are to be model disciples of Jesus Christ in all areas of faith and practice.
- (e) Whenever possible, decisions made by either the Elders or the Church Council shall be reached after prayerful consideration by unanimous vote in a spirit of humility, with each person regarding one another before themselves. We believe unanimity is gained through prayer, seeking the mind of Christ, and by submitting to one another, believing that, as we humble ourselves before God, He will direct us.

### ***Section 2 Structure Overview***

- (a) The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body.
- (b) The government of this Church shall be under the lordship of Jesus Christ

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and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as exercised through the Elders and Church Council, accountable to the general membership in mutual submission.

- (c) The directors of this corporation shall consist of the Church Council. In the spirit of shared leadership, each council member shall have a single equal vote on those matters brought before it for consideration. All activities and affairs of the Corporation shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Church Council, herein referred to as "Council".
- (d) The Officers of the Church shall be a (1) President/Council Chair, (2) Vice President, and (3) Secretary. They shall be elected by the council from among the current lay members of the Council. Officers and Lay members of the Council shall serve limited terms, be admitted, released and perform such duties as are defined in ARTICLE V Section 3.
- (e) Additional Council members shall be selected as needed by the Elders from among the general membership. They shall serve limited terms, be admitted, released and perform such duties as are defined in ARTICLE V Section 3.
- (f) The Elders shall be responsible for spiritual leadership of the Church and shall oversee teaching and doctrinal issues in accordance with the statement of faith (ARTICLE IV). Elders shall be admitted, released and perform such duties as are defined in ARTICLE V Section 4.
- (g) A Finance Committee shall be formed which operates as a sub-committee reporting to the Council. The Finance Committee shall include the Church Treasurer and be joined by at least one designated member of the Council. The Church Treasurer shall be affirmed by the general membership. Finance committee members shall be admitted, released and perform such duties as are defined in the Church policy and procedures manual.

### **Section 3 Church Council**

- (a) The Church Council consists of Pastor/Elders who serve together equally with elected Church officers and other appointed and affirmed lay leaders. Church officers shall be selected from among the lay Council members.
- (b) The Council functions as the board of directors of the corporation and is thus a deliberative and decision making body consisting of not less than seven (7) men and women with guidance over all Church operations committees and boards. The Council Chair or designee shall preside over Council meetings. The Council shall meet monthly or from time to time as need arises. Minutes shall be maintained of meetings as a permanent record of corporate business. Whenever motions are being considered,

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Roberts Rules of Order, second edition, shall dictate the deliberative procedures to be used.

- (c) Elders who are also employees shall not vote on any decision respecting salaries, benefits or employment status; however in the spirit of shared leadership, they may participate in those discussions at the discretion of the Council. This corporation shall not allow more than 49% of the Council to be employees of the Church.
- (d) Lay Council members shall be selected by the Elders from active members of the Church who meet the scriptural moral qualifications of 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, who exhibit the fruit of the spirit in Gal 5:22-23, and the leadership graces found in 1 Peter 5:2-9. Such lay Council members shall be approved by the Council and be affirmed annually by the general membership.
- (e) Lay council members and Church officers shall serve for not more than two consecutive three year terms. Once a second term has expired, they shall not be eligible to serve as on the council for a period of one year.
- (f) Quorum required for routine business shall be at least one half (50%) of the council. Special meetings may be requested by written agreement of any two council members. Quorum rules for such special meetings shall be at least two thirds (67%) of the Council and at least two thirds (67%) of those Elders qualified to attend unless excluded in accordance with ARTICLE V Section 3(c).
- (g) Any lay Council member shall be removed by a two thirds (67%) vote of the Council. Quorum rules for special meetings shall apply and the member under review shall not attend the meeting.
- (h) The founding directors as identified in the articles of incorporation filed with the secretary of state of California shall form the initial Council for this corporation.

### **Section 4 Elders**

- (a) The Elders shall be men called by God and qualified as pastors by seminary training or full time pastoral experience and with general favor in the evangelical community as worthy of representing the teachings and gospel of Christ. They shall meet the same scriptural qualifications as Council members given in ARTICLE V Section 3(d). In the spirit of shared leadership, they shall serve on the Church Council with equal vote.
- (b) Elders shall be responsible for developing and maintaining the guiding vision for the Church. They shall exercise spiritual leadership and have oversight over teaching and doctrinal issues in accordance with the

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statement of faith (ARTICLE IV).

- (c) Elders, when necessary, shall exercise spiritual discipline in accordance with scripture. In the event they are unsuccessful in winning their brother or sister, they may coordinate further action with the Council.
- (d) The Council, when it finds sufficient cause, may suspend (with pay) an employee/Elder from participating on the Council. A two thirds majority (67%) of the Council shall be required to suspend an Employee/Elder. Quorum rules for special meetings shall apply in accordance with ARTICLE V Section 3(f). An Elder who resigns after having been suspended by the Council shall receive a minimum of two months severance. Any additional amount shall be approved by the Council.
- (e) Once the Council has suspended an Elder, a timely meeting of the general membership shall be called to submit the suspended Elder for a balloted vote of confidence. Any meeting in which the suspension of an Elder will be considered will be announced two weeks in advance in Sunday bulletin and by such means as is usual and customary. A majority vote of confidence by the general membership shall be required to overturn the suspension and return the Elder to full rights and responsibilities. Voting by proxy is not allowed for this meeting. Failure to achieve a majority confidence vote will result in immediate dismissal with minimum two months severance.
- (f) When an Elder/pastoral staff vacancy occurs, the Council shall either abolish the vacant position or immediately appoint a search committee to recommend to the Council a replacement. For a new position, the Council shall present a job description and recommend compensation to the Church council for approval. Once approved by the Council the candidate Elder shall be submitted to the general membership for approval.
- (g) The founding Elders as identified in the articles of incorporation filed with the secretary of state of California shall form the initial Elders of the Church.

## **ARTICLE VI MEMBERSHIP**

### ***Section 1 Admission***

- (a) Persons desiring membership shall (1) express a desire to join to a church leader; (2) affirm Jesus Christ as his/her personal Savior and Lord verbally with a church pastor or council member and subsequently confirm that testimony through baptism by immersion in water or give evidence of such previous baptism; (3) attend an informational meeting and verbally affirm the church doctrinal statement and membership covenant before a

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Council member. Such persons shall be considered members once these three steps have been completed.

- (b) New members shall be recognized as such before the congregation in a forthcoming service of the Church.
- (c) The Church reserves the right to refer to non-member regular attendee's as members. Such reference does not entitle non-member to the rights of membership. They are invited to participate in Church business meetings but shall not disrupt the meetings nor participate in voice or balloted voting.
- (d) Membership is strongly encouraged, primarily for the value to the member of joining a family of believers who share like beliefs, commitments, vision, purpose and ministries and are mutually accountable to the same.

### ***Section 2 Rights & Responsibilities***

- (a) Members who are at least eighteen (18) years of age shall be eligible to vote at all church business meetings.
- (b) A special business meeting of the membership may be called by written petition of one tenth (10%) of the membership along with a proposed agenda for the special meeting. The meeting time and agenda shall be announced during at least two regular worship services. The members may replace any or all non employee Council members by a majority vote at such a congregational meeting having a quorum consisting of one third (33%) of the active members present.
- (c) Membership shall approve an annual budget at a meeting called for that purpose.
- (d) Membership shall annually affirm the tenure of Church officers and lay council members at a meeting called for that purpose.
- (e) Only church members shall be entitled to vote on amendments to this constitution in accordance with ARTICLE VII.

### ***Section 3 Meetings***

- (a) Meetings of the membership shall be chaired by the Council Chair or designee.
- (b) Business meeting shall be held annually or as needs arise.

### ***Section 4 Withdrawal or Removal***

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- (a) Whenever a member wishes to withdraw from church membership they shall provide written notification to an Elder or Council member.
- (b) After the Elders have exercised church discipline in accordance with ARTICLE V Section 4(c), they may recommend to the Council the removal of any member, subject to approval of the Council, after which the member will be so informed.
- (c) Any member, who is not active in church services or ministries for a period of six (6) months, and who, after reasonable effort, can not be contacted to determine their wishes, may be removed from the membership rolls.

### **Section 5 Membership Covenant**

- (a) Believing that God has led me to receive his Son Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord by the leading of the Holy Spirit, and having testified of this work of God and my saving faith by being baptized by water, I do now join with other believers of like experience and testimony to affirm this membership covenant of the local fellowship known as Oaks Bible Church of Goleta / Santa Barbara.
- (b) It is my commitment and desire to KNOW God more fully. Just as the apostle Paul counted knowing Christ as a surpassing value (Philippians 3:8), so I will strive to know Christ above all else. I will seek to know God more in the intimacy of worship, prayer and meditation on His person and Word. I will seek to know Him more in my loving fellowship with other members and friends of this local body of believers. I will seek to know Him more in my regular observance of Holy Communion. I will seek to know Him more in my receiving of his forgiveness, cleansing and giving of righteousness in regular confession of my sins (1 John 1:9). I will seek to know Him more as I strive to exemplify His godly words, conduct and integrity in all areas of my life.
- (c) It is my commitment and desire to GROW in respect to my salvation. Just as the apostle Peter knew the importance of reading and studying the Word of God, the Bible, to grow in respect to salvation (1 Peter 2:2), so I covenant to personally read and study my Bible that I may grow spiritually. I will also strive to mature in my faith, growing up in all aspects of Him, conforming to the image of Christ that God intends for me (Ephesians 4:15; Romans 8:29). Therefore I will strive to esteem one another (Philippians 2:3), build up the church with my willing participation (Ephesians 4:16), purposefully and cheerfully support the church with my financial contributions (2 Corinthians 9:6-7), encourage and stimulate one another toward Christian maturity (Hebrews 10:24-25), support, assist and pray for the leadership of the church (Hebrews 13:17-18), seek to care for the needs of each other (Galatians 6:2-10) and walk in the purity of the Light as He is in the light so that I might truly fellowship with other



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members of Christ's body, the Church (1 John 1:7).

- (d) It is my commitment and desire to GO forth for God in the sharing of His love and gospel message. I will teach God's Word in my family and to others under my care (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). I will pass on God's good news of salvation in word and deed to my personal community of acquaintances (Acts 1:8). I will seek to be a part of the Great Commission to win the world for Christ as I minister in my community and beyond to support God's work in the world; and I will go, as God leads and enables me, to my family, neighborhood, community and world as God's ambassador of love and grace (Matthew 28:19).
- (e) I do understand that as I verbally affirm this Membership Covenant and accompanying Oaks Bible Church Statement of Faith as aligning with my personal beliefs and desires before a pastor/elder or Council member of Oaks Bible – I am a full member of Oaks Bible Church of Goleta / Santa Barbara.

## **ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS**

### ***Section 1 Constitutional Amendments***

- (a) COUNCIL REVIEW: Amendments shall first be submitted to the church council for approval. Quorum rules for special meetings shall apply per ARTICLE V Section 3(f).
- (b) AMENDMENT REVIEW MEETING: Once approved by the Council, a special meeting of the general membership shall be called for the purpose of reviewing the proposed amendments. Copies of the proposed amendment shall be available for the general membership at this meeting. A favorable vote of a least two thirds (67%) shall be required to call an amendment ratification meeting. Voting shall be voice vote unless a balloted vote requested.
- (c) AMENDMENT RATIFICATION MEETING: To allow sufficient time for study and prayerful consideration, the bylaws amendment meeting shall occur not less than two (2) weeks following the review meeting. Ratification shall be by a favorable vote of at least two thirds (67%). Voting shall be by voice vote, unless ballot voting is requested.