

# **BYLAWS OF BERKELEY COVENANT CHURCH**

## **ARTICLE I. Membership.**

### **Section 1. Admission into membership.**

#### **a.) Application for membership.**

A written application for membership shall be placed with the pastor or member of the Board of Elders. The applicants shall complete a course in the Inquirers' Class (to include instruction in our Covenant heritage and the workings of this congregation, especially its governance and requirements of its members), after which they shall appear before the Board of Elders (or in special cases, representatives of the Board of Elders) to give a confession of their Christian faith, according to Article V of the constitution. When the Board of Elders has reviewed their applications and received their testimonies favorably, their applications shall be submitted to the next congregational business meeting for approval. New members shall be accepted by unanimous vote at the business meeting. If a dissenting vote is cast, the application shall be referred back to the Board of Elders for further recommendation. A second recommendation for membership by the Board of Elders to the congregation shall be accepted by no less than 90% vote at a business meeting.

#### **b) Transfer of membership.**

Applicants from other Christian churches shall submit letters of transfer, when available, to the pastor and/or a member of the Board of Elders, who shall act upon the application according to the requirements of paragraph a) of this section.

#### **c.) Reception of new members.**

Applicants who are voted into the membership of the church shall be welcomed at the next service of Holy Communion and shall make public confession of their Christian faith.

### **Section 2. Children.**

Children of the church family shall be nurtured under its spiritual care. When they have reached confirmation age, they shall receive special instruction by the pastor in the Word of God, Christian doctrine, and the history of the church; thereafter, upon personal manifestation of spiritual life and examination by the Board of Elders, they shall be received into membership of the church, as outlined under Section 1, paragraph a) of this article.

### **Section 3. Associate membership.**

Associate membership is available to applicants who desire to retain membership in another Christian church while temporarily residing in the local community for such reasons as study, employment, or health. Applicants shall qualify for membership under Article V of the

constitution and Article I, Section 1, of these bylaws. Associate members shall be entitled to participate in the privileges and responsibilities of this church, to engage in its active service, and to hold office therein, but they shall be counted and reported only in the membership of the church where they permanently reside.

#### **Section 4. Responsibility of membership.**

All members shall assume the responsibilities and obligations placed on them by the Word of God and the church. They shall, through their witness by life and word, consecrated service, prayer, and financial support further the cause of Christ in the local church, the denomination, and the world at large.

#### **Section 5. Discipline.**

##### **a.) Negligent members.**

Members who willfully neglect their duties, or fail to attend services of the church regularly, or to contribute to its support according to their means, shall be admonished by the Board of Elders. If this admonition is not heeded, they shall be dealt with as erring members.

##### **b.) Erring members.**

A member known to err in doctrine or conduct shall be counseled according to the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1. A fellow member having knowledge of such error shall in the spirit of Christian love seek to restore the brother or sister. If he or she fails to heed this counsel, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Elders, which shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore the person. If he or she fails to heed the counsel of the Board of Elders, the error shall be brought forth before a congregational business meeting. Discipline shall then be administered in the spirit of Christ, with due regard for the welfare of the individual as well as the church.

##### **c.) Dismissal of members.**

Dismissal of a member under paragraphs a.) and b.) of this section must be acted on by the church, which alone has the authority. A three-fourths vote of those present and voting at a congregational business meeting is necessary for such action.

#### **Section 6. Transfer of members.**

Members who move to another community should soon thereafter identify themselves with the local Covenant church or with some other evangelical Christian church. Application for transfer of membership shall be made in writing to the pastor who shall issue the transfer to the church with which a member is uniting. Withdrawal of said membership shall be reported through the Board of Elders to the next congregational business meeting, where it shall be a matter of record.

**Section 7. Removal of membership.**

Request for withdrawal from membership in the church shall be made in writing to the pastor or the Board of Elders. After careful consideration, the Board of Elders shall report this request to the next congregational business meeting.

**Section 8. Forfeiture of property rights.**

A member who has been properly dismissed from the church or has withdrawn membership has forfeited all rights to any and all property of the church.

**Section 9. Nonmember friends.**

Nonmember parish friends shall be enrolled by the church as a part of its total constituency. The church and its pastor shall serve them in all their spiritual needs, and they shall be encouraged to consider this their church home. They shall be kept informed of the activities of the church

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**ARTICLE II. Pastor.**

**Section 1. Qualifications.**

The pastor of the church shall meet the New Testament requirements of the office (I Timothy 3:2-7) and shall be a member in good standing in the Covenant Ministerium. Both pastor and spouse shall, by virtue of the call, be members of the church. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Elders and all standing committees within the church.

**Section 2. Duties.**

The pastor shall be devoted to the service of the church, preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments, and faithfully attending to pastoral work. Responsibilities shall include providing the church with an accurate record of pastoral acts and a written report at the first regular congregational meeting of the business year. The pastor shall practice good administrative procedures and cooperate with the Board of Elders, and shall supervise all staff members.

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**Section 3. Cooperation.**

The pastor shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the Covenant, the regional conference, and fellow ministers.

**Section 4. Call.**

The pastor shall be called at a regular or special congregational business meeting, the purpose of which shall be publicized on not less than two consecutive Sunday mornings prior to the meeting. The call shall be determined by a closed ballot with a 75% vote in favor required of those present and voting (abstentions do not count as a vote.) It shall be for an indefinite period of time, with a minimum of six weeks notice required by the church or the pastor for termination of pastoral duties. When the church receives aid from the conference and/or the Covenant through subsidy or loans, a call to the pastor shall be extended jointly by the church and the local regional conference, subject to approval by the executive secretary of Covenant Home Missions.

**Section 5. Charges against the pastor.**

Charges against the pastor shall be submitted in writing and shall not be considered unless supported by the testimony of two or more witnesses. If in the judgement of the church, the pastor has erred in doctrine or conduct, the Board of Elders shall admonish him. If the problem persists, the case shall be referred to the committee on ministerial standing and discipline of the local regional conference prior to further action by the church. If dismissal of the pastor for error in doctrine or conduct is necessary, it shall be made by action of the congregation at a duly called congregational business meeting, and shall require a simple majority vote of those present and voting.

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**ARTICLE III. Officers.**

**Section 1. Qualifications.**

The officers of the church shall meet the qualifications for elders as stated in Article IV, Section 1, of these bylaws.

**a.) Chair,**

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The chair shall preside at all business meetings of the church and of the Board of Elders, and shall be an ex-officio member of all ministry committees with voting privileges. Care shall be taken to confer with the pastor in preparing the agenda for such meetings, and to utilize the counsel that the pastor may give by virtue of training, experience, and calling. The chair shall be responsible for leadership of the church services in the pastor's absence

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**b.) Vice-chair,**

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The vice-chair shall assist the chair and during an absence assume that office and its duties.

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**c.) Secretary.**

The secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes, including attendance records of all business meetings of the church and of the Board of Elders, and shall conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated to him or her, and shall also be responsible for the official seal and documents of the church.

**d.) Treasurer.**

The treasurer shall be responsible for all funds committed to him or her and shall make disbursements as authorized by the church or the Board of Elders. The treasurer shall also present a written report of the receipts and expenditures to each regular meeting of the Board of Elders and to each regular congregational business meeting.

**Section 3. Election and tenure.**

At the annual business meeting of the church the chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer shall be elected for terms of one year and, with the exception of the treasurer, shall serve not more than three consecutive terms. The treasurer may serve six consecutive terms. Any officer who has served the term limit will be eligible for re-election to that office after a lapse of one year.

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**ARTICLE IV. Board of Elders.**

**Section 1. Qualifications.**

a.) An elder shall be a man or woman whose membership is in good standing and who is active in the support of the total ministry of the church, financially and otherwise. An elder shall engage regularly in personal Bible reading and prayer, and participate in the spiritual nurture of the congregation.

b.) Members of the Board of Elders who miss more than two (2) monthly meetings without good cause during the business year, or who conduct themselves in such a way as to violate their qualifications as elders, may be dropped from the Board of Elders and their offices declared vacant by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire board.

c.) An elder's attitude of service shall be in harmony with I Peter 5:1-4: "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory."

d.) Because the Board of Elders shall serve as the diaconate, the following qualifications shall also apply to Elders: "Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to

much wine, not greedy for gain; they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons. The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husband of one wife, and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 3:8-13).

**Section 2. Size, composition, election and tenure.**

a.) The Board of Elders shall consist of nine (9) members.

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b.) Those nine (9) members shall include:

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- 1. The four (4) church officers who shall be elected annually to their specific offices (chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer) in accordance with Article III, Section 3, of these bylaws.
- 2. Four (4) other elders who shall serve for terms of three (3) years in such a manner that the terms of approximately one-third (1/3) of the members shall expire each year. They shall not serve more than two consecutive terms.
- 3. The Pastor, ex-officio,

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Deleted: The president of Covenant Women, who will be elected annually by that organization.

**Section 3. Organization.**

Following the Annual Congregational Business Meeting the Board of Elders shall convene to appoint from its own number chairs for ministry committees. Church officers may be appointed, to ministry committees as the Board of Elders deems necessary.

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**Section 4. Responsibilities.**

The Board of Elders in its administrative responsibility, in cooperation with the pastor and the pastoral staff, shall fulfill the functions defined by the constitution and bylaws, including the following:

- a.) Supervise church membership, including recommendations relative to reception or removal of members.
- b.) Assist the pastor in nurturing the spiritual life of the church, in shepherding and caring for the members and nonmember friends.
- c.) Assist the pastor in the worship life of the church, including administration of the sacraments as planned by the pastor.
- d.) Establish administrative and program policies in conformity with the church constitution.
- e.) Encourage the evangelistic outreach of the church, and give guidance to the church's discipling ministry.

f.) Organize, coordinate, and control the financial operations of the church, including the planning and recommendation of the annual budget and stewardship opportunities for the church. Review salaries.

g.) Oversee the proper care and maintenance of church grounds and facilities and review insurance needs.

h.) Call the church to obedience in the area of biblical social action.

i.) Provide biblically-based Christian education ministries for children, young people and adults.

j.) Foster interest in and support of World Missions.

k.) Approve all major unbudgeted expenditures up to \$2000.00.

l.) Review and approve the schedule of the church activities and personnel.

m.) Evaluate the total church program on a continuing basis.

n.) Appoint members to the ministry committees, as defined by Article IV, Section 5, of these bylaws. Determine the size of these committees and the frequency of their meetings.

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o.) Act on all vacancies of elected members and appoint a successor to serve the balance of the business year.

p.) Appoint, compensate, and discharge employees of the church, excluding those called by the congregation.

q.) Secure congregational approval for the following: (1) call of all full-time ministerial staff; (2) the annual budget; and (3) any non-budgeted expenditures exceeding 2% of the annual expense budget; (4) total non-budgeted expenditures in one fiscal year exceeding 5% of the annual expense budget.

**Section 5. Ministry Committees.**

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Implementation of policies and programs established by congregational or Board of Elders action may be accomplished through the following ministry committees:

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a.) Worship and Music Ministry Committee.

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b.) Evangelism and Discipleship Ministry Committee.

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c.) Membership and Visitation Ministry Committee.

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d.) Stewardship and Properties Ministry Committee.

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e.) Christian Education Ministry Committee,

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f.) Publicity and Promotion Ministry Committee,

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g.) Social Action Ministry Committee,

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h.) World Missions Ministry Committee.

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Appointments to these ministry committees shall be for a term of one year, subject to renewal. Members of the Board of Elders who are not serving as church officers (with the exception of the vice-chair) shall serve as chair of the ministry committees to which they are appointed and shall assume responsibility for directing all congregational activities which fall within that functional category, in cooperation with the pastor.

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## ARTICLE V. Appointed/Elected Positions.

### Section 1. Financial secretary.

The financial secretary shall receive, record, and deposit all funds contributed to the church and shall transmit to the church treasurer a record of the same. The position shall be filled by annual appointment by the Board of Elders at their final meeting of the business year and reported to the first regular congregational meeting of the next business year.

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### Section 2. Sunday school superintendent.

The Sunday school superintendent shall direct the work of the Sunday school in cooperation with the Christian Education Ministry Committee, and shall submit a written report of its activities to the first regular congregational meeting of the business year. The superintendent shall serve as a member of the Christian Education Ministry Committee. The position shall be filled annually by election at the annual business meeting.

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### Section 3. Assistant Sunday school superintendent.

The assistant Sunday school superintendent shall assume the duties of the Sunday school superintendent in the absence of the latter, and shall oversee and supervise the Children's Church ministry. The assistant superintendent shall be a member of the Christian Education Ministry Committee. The position shall be filled annually by election at the annual business meeting.

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### Section 4. Head usher.



The head usher shall supervise the ushering ministry for all public services of the church and shall serve as a member of the Worship and Music Ministry Committee. The position shall be filled by election at the annual business meeting.

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**Section 5. Pastoral relations committee members.**

Two people shall be elected to serve with the church vice-chair on the pastoral relations committee in accordance with Article VI, Section 3, of these bylaws. One shall be a member of the Board of Elders; the other shall be selected from the congregation at large. Both shall be elected by the congregation at its annual business meeting.

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**Section 6. Auditors.**

Two auditors shall be elected by the congregation at its annual business meeting to examine the financial records of the church at the conclusion of the fiscal year and to provide an auditor's report at the first regular congregational meeting of the immediately following business year.

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**Section 7. Conference liaison.**

One conference liaison shall be elected by the congregation at its annual business meeting to attend the Conference annual meeting as a delegate from the church and to lead the church's other delegates; to report to the church regarding Conference ministries, events, prayer concerns, and financial requests; to report to the Conference regarding the ministry, leadership, and needs of the church; and to meet periodically with representatives from other churches.

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**ARTICLE VI. Committees.**

**Section 1. Executive committee.**

The executive committee, consisting of the church chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer, together with the pastor of the church, shall strive to promote effective working relations and communication in the church. The committee shall have no legislative power, but function in an advisory capacity to the Board of Elders, unless specific responsibilities shall have been assigned to it by the Board of Elders or the church.

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**Section 2. Nominating committee.**

The nominating committee shall consist of five (5) members, two of which shall be members of the Board of Elders, who shall be elected at a congregational business meeting at least three (3) months prior to the annual business meeting. The pastor and the financial secretary shall be ex-officio members of the committee. After being convened by the church chair, committee members shall elect their own chair and secretary. The responsibility of the committee shall include the following:

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- a.) Prepare a ballot for the annual congregational business meeting listing at least one qualified candidate for each office to be filled.
- b.) Confirm the willingness of candidates to serve before listing their names on the ballot.
- c.) Distribute sample ballots to the membership at least two (2) weeks prior to the election.
- d.) Other candidates for office may be added by a petition signed by two (2) or more active members of the church and filed with the nominating committee at least two days prior to the election.
- e.) Present the ballot to the annual congregational business meeting.

**Section 3. Pastoral relations committee.**

The pastoral relations committee shall meet at least once a year with the pastor to evaluate the relationship between the pastor and the congregation. The pastoral relations committee shall consist of three (3) members: the church vice-chair, another elder, and one member from the congregation at large. The latter two shall be elected by the congregation at its annual business meeting. See Article V, Section 5, of these bylaws.

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**Section 4. Special committees.**

Special committees for specific purposes may be appointed by any duly constituted congregational business meeting or by the Board of Elders, according to need, but shall be automatically terminated at the next annual meeting unless specifically extended by said annual meeting. Ad hoc committees may be appointed by the chair of the church.

Deleted: Section 4. Adeney House Residence Committee.¶  
The Adeney House residence committee shall consist of three members to be appointed by the Board of Elders. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the committee. The Board of Elders shall designate one committee member (not the pastor) to chair the committee. The committee chair shall also be known as the apartment manager. The committee shall manage the residence(s) in the Adeney House in a manner to be specified by the Board of Elders. ¶

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**ARTICLE VII. Meetings.**

**Section 1. Public services.**

Public services shall be conducted regularly on Sundays for worship, fellowship, preaching and teaching of God’s Word and prayer. These will be supplemented by small group meetings on weekdays for Bible study, discipleship training, mutual caring, and prayer.

**Section 2. Conducting sacraments.**

The sacrament of Holy Communion shall be conducted regularly as determined by the Board of Elders and the pastor. The sacrament of baptism shall be conducted in keeping with Covenant principles and according to the needs of the constituency.

**Section 3. Congregational business meetings.**

Regular business meetings shall be held three times each business year, separated by at least two (2) months, as specified in Article VIII of the constitution. Special business meetings may be called by the chair of the church in consultation with the pastor or by the Board of Elders.

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**Section 4. Board of Elders and administrative task force meetings.**

Regular meetings of the Board of Elders shall be held once each month at a time specified. Ministry committees and special committees shall meet not less than at a frequency specified by the Board of Elders. Special meetings of the Board of Elders, the executive committee, the ministry committees, and special committees may be called by their respective chairs.

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**Section 5. Organization meetings.**

Meetings and activities of the organizations of the church shall be cleared by the Board of Elders and/or the pastor.

**ARTICLE VIII. Auxiliary Organizations.**

**Section 1. Purpose of auxiliary organizations.**

The purpose of the auxiliary organizations is to implement programs and activities and provide services as approved and overseen by the Board of Elders. The auxiliary organizations shall work in harmony with the purposes of this church and shall support its programs and policies.

**Section 2. Beginning an auxiliary organization.**

Auxiliary organizations of the church shall be recognized and initiated only upon the approval of the Board of Elders. Authorization may be granted upon approval of a statement of purpose, organizational plan, or operational guidelines, and personnel and budget needs.

**Section 3. Organizational supervision.**

Auxiliary organizations shall be responsible to the Board of Elders. Their organizational plan or operational guidelines shall be in harmony with the constitution and bylaws of the church.

**Section 4. Qualification of officers.**

Only members of the church in good standing or persons approved by the Board of Elders may serve as officers.

**Section 5. Coordination with church program.**

Auxiliary organizations shall cooperate with the total church program. Their meetings shall not conflict with the scheduled meetings of the church unless approved by the Board of Elders.

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**ARTICLE IX. General Provisions.**

**Section 1. Quorum.**

a.) Twenty-five percent of the membership, attending a business meeting properly called, shall constitute a quorum.

b.) The quorum for the Board of Elders, committee, and task force meetings shall be a majority of its membership.

**Section 2. Rules of order.**

*Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern matters not specifically mentioned in these bylaws.

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**ARTICLE X. Amendments.**

Amendments to these bylaws not in conflict with the constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting, at a congregational business meeting, providing that such amendments have been presented in writing to the Board of Elders and at a preceding congregational business meeting at least two months prior.

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