

# CONSTITUTION

(AS REVISED ON September 19, 2010)



**valley**community  
BAPTIST CHURCH

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**CONSTITUTION**  
**OF**  
**VALLEY COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Avon, Connecticut**

**Preamble**

Trusting in the Lord Jesus for our salvation, looking to the New Testament as our sole and perfect rule of faith and practice, and accepting the teachings and practices of the Baptists and the distinctives for which they have ever stood, we, therefore, voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ for a more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the eternal Work of God, in the adoption and establishment of this Constitution of our government and plan of worship and service. In all things we are here for God and others.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **Name and Organization**

1. NAME: Valley Community Baptist Church (“VCBC”)
2. ORGANIZATION: The organization took place February 26, 1976.
3. INCORPORATION: VCBC shall be incorporated as a nonprofit religious corporation under the laws of the State of Connecticut.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this Church shall be:

1. To worship God according to the teachings of His Word. Luke 4:8; John 4:23-24.
2. To obey Christ's great commission as set forth in Matt. 28:19-20, Acts 1:8, through the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ providing a means for personal and corporate evangelism and participating in support of missionary activities.
3. To provide for the preaching and teaching of the Word of God to equip believers, so that as we serve others, the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4:12-13).

## ARTICLE III

### Our Church Covenant

Having been led by the Holy Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and to confess Him as Lord, and on confession of this faith having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully covenant with one another, as one body in Christ, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him.

We promise by the aid of the Holy Spirit to forsake the ways of sin and to walk together in Christian love and in the paths of righteousness. With this in view we engage to strive together for both the peace and purity of this Church; to sustain its worship and steadfastly to cherish and hold its ordinances, discipline and doctrines to contribute, as faithful stewards, such time, talent and money, in the measure that God prospers each of us, that the responsibility for the work of the local Church and the world-wide ministry of spreading the Gospel be faithfully and effectively discharged.

We will endeavor to maintain family and private devotions; to teach the Bible to our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to be just in our dealings and faithful in our engagements; to be exemplary in our deportment; to avoid unkind words and unrighteous anger; to abstain from every form of evil; to combine zeal and knowledge in our efforts to advance the cause of our Savior and to make Christ first in all things both spiritual and temporal.

We promise to give and receive admonition with meekness and affection; to remember each other in prayer, and to aid each other in case of sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation. When called upon to teach, such teaching will be in accordance with our Church Covenant and our Affirmation of Faith. In keeping with the scriptural principles of 1 Cor. 6:1-8, as members we will refrain from legal action against the pastors, elders, deacons, Church staff, or Church officers in connection with the performance of their duties, or any fellow believer. When we move from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some local Church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of the Word of God.

## ARTICLE IV

### Our Affirmation of Faith

1. THE WORD OF GOD--We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.  
(John 17:17; Rom. 15:4; II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:19-21)
2. THE TRINITY--We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.  
(Matt. 28:19; John 1:1-4; I John 5:7)
3. GOD THE FATHER--We believe in God, the Father, an infinite personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (1 Tim. 2:3-5; 1 John 5:11-15)
4. GOD THE SON-JESUS CHRIST--We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.  
(Isa. 7:14; John 1:14; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 1:2, 3:1 John 1:7)
5. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT--We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is our abiding helper, teacher and guide. (John 14:26; John 16:7-15; Rom. 8:14-17; Eph. 1:13-14)
6. REGENERATION--We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.  
(John 1:12-13; John 3:3, 16-17; Acts 20:21; Eph. 2:1-9; Titus 3:5)
7. THE CHURCH--We believe in the universal Church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local Church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local Church the primary task of giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. (Matt. 16:16-18; Acts 2:38-41; Eph. 2:19-22; Eph. 5:25-27)
8. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT--We believe that each Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of their fellowmen; that their conduct should be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others, the full stature of maturity in Christ.

(II Cor. 9:6-8; Eph. 4:11-16; Phil. 2:14-16; Col. 3:17-23; I Thess. 5:17-18)

9. THE ORDINANCES--We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local Church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:41; Rom. 6:3-5; I Cor. 11:23-32)
10. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY--We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each Church is independent and must be free from interference by anyone. (Deut. 10:12-22; Eph.3:10-12)
11. CHURCH COOPERATION--We believe that local Churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the Churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with inter-denominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis. (Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor.1:10)
12. THE LAST THINGS--We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked. (John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:1-15; II Cor. 5:10, Matt. 25:31-46)

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Character, Government and Affiliations**

1. The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose its membership.
2. The board of directors of the corporation shall be known herein as the Elder Board, and its members shall be the directors of the corporation. The Church Chairman will be designated President of the corporation. The directors will elect a Secretary of the corporation from among directors other than the President of the corporation.
3. The fiscal year of VCBC shall begin on June 1 and close on May 31.
4. This Church shall be subject to no ecclesiastical body but recognizes and sustains the responsibility of mutual counsel, cooperation and support of:
  - a. District. This Church shall be affiliated with Converge Northeast (Northeast Baptist Conference).
  - b. National. This Church shall be affiliated with Converge Worldwide (Baptist General Conference).

## Article VI

### Membership

#### Section 1. Procedures for Becoming a Member.

Any person who professes faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord may be recommended for membership in VCBC by the Membership and Baptism Committee, according to the following procedures:

- A. Qualifications for Membership. Each applicant for membership:
  - 1. Shall agree to abide by the provisions of the VCBC Constitution;
  - 2. Shall successfully complete the Membership Class offered at the time, which shall include an interview with at least two of the following: Membership and Baptism Committee Member, Elder, Deacon and a member of the ministry staff who shall thereafter communicate his or her evaluation of the applicant's candidacy to the Membership and Baptism Committee;
  - 3. Shall be baptized by immersion as a believer or shall give satisfactory evidence of previous baptism by immersion as a believer; and
  - 4. Shall agree with and affirm Article III (Our Church Covenant), Article IV (Our Affirmation of Faith) and this Article VI (Membership).
- B. Reception into Membership. Each applicant recommended for membership by the Membership and Baptism Committee shall be received into membership upon the affirmative vote of the membership at a scheduled Congregational Meeting of VCBC.

#### Section 2. Responsibilities and Rights of Members.

- A. The responsibilities of the members of VCBC are those set forth in the Scriptures, and in this Constitution, including the VCBC Covenant and the Affirmation of Faith. These include regular participation in the public services of VCBC, faithful stewardship of time, talents and possessions in the ministries of VCBC, and leading an exemplary life fittingly representative of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church in the community. Members shall endeavor to preserve the unity of this Church, and it shall be their responsibility to refrain from disrupting its fellowship.
- B. Members shall have no property rights in this Church and upon termination of membership shall be entitled to no right, title or interest in its assets.
- C. All members in good standing shall have the rights of membership, as provided in this Constitution.

Section 3. Status of Members.

- A. The phrase "member in good standing" shall mean any person who has been received into membership in VCBC and who has not been placed on the inactive list by the Membership and Baptism Committee or whose membership has not been terminated.
- B. The phrase "non-resident member" shall mean any member in good standing whose life circumstances do not permit him or her to attend regularly, such as a student, missionary, military service person, retirement home resident or shut-in, but who nevertheless desires to maintain his or her membership in VCBC.
- C. The phrase "inactive member" shall mean any member who is no longer active in the worship or ministry of the church, or has permanently moved out of the area. The Membership and Baptism Committee shall place an inactive member on the inactive roll at which time he or she will cease to be a member in good standing.
- D. The Membership and Baptism Committee shall be responsible for determining the status of members.

Section 4. Discipline of Members.

- A. All grievances between members shall be handled by them in accordance with the Scriptural principles in Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; Gal. 6:1; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-24. Any grievance not resolved between members shall first be brought to the Elder Board by a written submission describing the nature of the grievance and the biblical steps taken to resolve it. The Elder Board, with the assistance, if necessary, of pastors or deacons, shall investigate the grievance and endeavor to effect a reconciliation of the members. Failing reconciliation, the Elder Board may take appropriate disciplinary action, including, in certain instances, recommending the termination of membership at a congregational meeting. No public complaint shall be made by any member until this course of action has been fully pursued.
- B. Any member who persistently violates his or her responsibilities as a member of this Church may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by the Elder Board. The Elder Board, with the assistance, if necessary, of pastors or deacons, shall investigate the violations and endeavor to effect reconciliation with the member. Failing reconciliation, the Elder Board may take appropriate disciplinary action following the Elder Discipline Policy and Procedure. This may include in certain instances, recommending the termination of membership at a congregational meeting. No public complaint shall be made by any member until this course of action has been fully pursued.
- C. All disciplinary action shall be corrective and redemptive in nature, and shall be administered with a view to reconciliation and restoration.

Section 5. Termination of Membership.

- A. The membership of any person shall be automatically terminated upon resignation in writing or after one year on the inactive roll.
- B. The Elder Board may recommend to the membership matters requiring further discipline including termination of membership of any member for failure to respond appropriately to disciplinary action. Such recommendations will be presented to the membership at a Congregational Meeting.

Section 6. Appeals and Restoration.

- A. Any person whose membership has been terminated in accordance with Section 5.A above or who has been the subject of disciplinary action other than under Section 5.B, may appeal such action to the membership by giving the Church Chairman a written notice of his or her intention to appeal. The appeal process will follow the policies and procedures as set forth by the Elder Board.
- B. Restoration from the Inactive List. If a member who is on the inactive list wishes to resume his or her status as a member in good standing, he or she shall meet each of the qualifications set forth in Subsections A and B of this Section 1 before being restored into membership.
- C. Restoration from Termination. A person whose membership has been terminated may be readmitted to membership only upon the recommendation of the Membership and Baptism Committee to the membership and the affirmative vote of the membership at a scheduled Congregational Meeting of the church. The Membership and Baptism Committee shall prescribe the form of application for readmission to membership.

## Article VII

### Governance

#### Section 1. Governance.

The government of VCBC shall be vested in its membership, and shall be administered through the organization established in Articles V and VII.

#### Section 2. Eligibility to Serve on Boards and Committees.

Only members in good standing shall be eligible to serve on the committees, boards, and other instruments of governance created under or pursuant to this Constitution. Lay Members who serve on the committees, boards and other instruments of governance created under or pursuant to this Constitution shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the membership at Congregational Meetings called for that purpose. When filling a vacancy, an elected committee member shall serve for the balance of the unexpired term which shall be considered a full term. Pastor and Ministry Staff Members may be appointed to various committees, boards and other instruments of governance. However, Other Staff Members while eligible to serve may not do so where a conflict of interest may exist.

#### Section 3. Committee and Board Reporting to the Congregation.

A. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible, at each annual meeting of the VCBC Congregation and at such other times as any vacancy or vacancies may occur in elective offices of VCBC, for presenting in nomination the name of at least one qualified person for each elective office.

1. Qualifications. A member of the Nominating Committee must have the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
2. Nomination and Election. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least six members. One member shall be appointed by the Elder Board from the Elder Board. The Elder shall be a voting member of the Nominating Committee, but may not serve as Chairperson. Each year the Nominating Committee shall nominate the appropriate number of candidates for election to the Nominating Committee by the VCBC membership.
3. Term of Office. All elected members shall serve for a term of three years. Terms are to be staggered. A member may not serve on the Nominating Committee for at least one year following the completion of a three year term.
4. Responsibility and Authority. The Nominating Committee may solicit names from members of the church staff and/or members and friends of the

congregation for candidates to fill open elected positions. Except in the case of vacancies, the report of the committee shall be posted at least fifteen days prior to an election. Responsibilities of the Nominating Committee are outlined in its policies and procedures which shall be approved by the Congregation.

5. Chairperson of the Nominating Committee.
    - a. Qualifications. The Chairperson of the Nominating Committee shall meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and shall have served one year on the Nominating Committee.
    - b. Election - Prior to the end of each Church year, the Nominating Committee shall nominate one of the non-staff members to serve as chairperson for the next Church year.
    - c. Term of Office. The Chairperson of the Nominating Committee shall serve for a term of one year. The Chairperson shall be ineligible for a period of one year after the completion their term term.
  6. Relationship to Staff. The Ministry Staff shall work in partnership with the Nominating Committee to fulfill its responsibilities
- B. Elder Board. The Elder Board shall oversee all ministry and operational functions of the church.
1. Qualifications. A member of the Elder Board must have the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
  2. Nomination and Election. Each year the Nominating Committee shall nominate the appropriate number of candidates for election by VCBC membership to the Elder Board.
  3. Term of Office. Elected members of the Elder Board, other than VCBC Chairman, shall serve for a term of three years. Terms are to be staggered. A member may not serve on the Elder Board for at least one year following the completion of a full three-year term.
  4. Responsibility and Authority - The Elder Board shall have the responsibility for spiritual leadership and oversight of the ministries of VCBC. The Board, as servant leaders, recognizing their accountability to the congregation, is empowered to act on these affairs on behalf of VCBC. Duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following (refer to Elder Job Description for a more comprehensive listing of responsibilities):
    - a. Overseeing the relationships with other Churches and organizations outside VCBC.

- b. Developing the leadership within VCBC. The Elder Board will work with the Pastors to select and equip individuals for leadership roles in the ministries of VCBC.
  - c. The long term spiritual direction, strategic planning and vision-casting for VCBC.
  - d. Evaluating the performance of the organization against established goals and plans.
  - e. Evaluating the performance of the Senior Pastor in leading the organization to accomplish its goals and plans.
  - f. Approving, and causing to be presented, the annual operating budget, world outreach budget, capital budget and the report of the Foundation Fund to the membership for approval.
  - g. Approving the staffing plan, position descriptions and compensation structure for the organization.
  - h. Approving the internal financial and operational controls. The Elder Board shall also ensure that the financial records and statements of the church are audited annually by an external auditor and shall cause to be conducted such internal audits of VCBC's financial records and procedures as are warranted
  - i. Supervision over all legal affairs of VCBC.
5. Each Elder Board member shall be an *ex officio*, non-voting member of all other boards and committees of VCBC except the Nominating Committee.
6. The Elder Board shall periodically report on its deliberations and decisions to the VCBC membership at the Quarterly Congregational Meetings and at such other times as may be necessary.
7. Elder Board Organization - The Elder Board shall consist of the following nine voting members: VCBC Chairman, Senior Pastor and seven members elected by VCBC. The Executive Pastor shall be a non-voting member. Six voting members of the Elder Board shall constitute a quorum. Although affirmative action shall require a minimum of five votes, unity and a oneness of mind and heart are to be sought on all decisions.
8. Church Chairman.
- a. Qualifications. In addition to the qualifications stated in Article VII Section 3.B.1, it is preferable that the Church Chairman have served previously as a member of the Elder Board.
  - b. Nomination and Election. Each year the Nominating Committee shall nominate a candidate for election by the VCBC membership to the office of Church Chairman.
  - c. Term of Office. The Chairman shall serve for a term of one year. A member may serve as Chairman for three consecutive one-year terms. A member may not serve as Chairman for at least one year

following the completion of three consecutive one-year terms as Chairman.

- d. The Church Chairman shall be the Chairman of the Elder Board, shall direct the work of the Elder Board, and shall preside at the Congregational Meetings of the VCBC membership.
9. Relationship to Staff. The Senior Pastor shall serve as a voting member and the Executive Pastor shall serve as a non-voting member of the Elder Board.

Section 4. Committees and Board Reporting to the Elder Board:

- A. Deacon Board. The Deacons shall assist the Board of Elders and pastor(s) responsible for the caring functions of VCBC
  1. Qualifications. A Deacon must have the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13 and may be either male or female.
  2. Nomination and Election. Each year the Nominating Committee shall nominate the appropriate number of candidates for election by the VCBC membership to the Deacon Board. The number of deacons shall be that number that from time to time shall be recommended to the VCBC membership by the Elder Board and approved by the membership. In making its nominations, the Nominating Committee shall ensure that the number of men and the number of women serving as Deacons shall be as nearly equal as possible. The Elder Board shall assign a pastor(s) or ministry staff member(s) as a voting member of this committee.
  3. Term of Office. Deacons shall serve for a term of two years. A Deacon shall be eligible for election to three two year terms of office. A Deacon shall be ineligible for re-election during the period of one full year following the completion of three consecutive two-year terms.
  4. Responsibility and Authority. The Deacon Board shall be charged specifically with the following:
    - a. Assist the Elders in meeting the spiritual and care needs of VCBC.
    - b. Oversee a visitation program among members and friends-in-fellowship, including the sick and shut-ins.
    - c. Assist the pastor leading worship in the administration of the ordinances at worship services and to directly administer communion to the sick and shut-ins.
    - d. Appoint and oversee sub-committees to assist the Deacons in meeting the care needs of those in VCBC as needed.

- e. Oversee activities to meet the material needs of members and friends.
  - f. Assist in other activities as directed by the Elder Board.
5. Chairperson of the Deacon Board.
- a. Qualifications. The Chairperson of the Deacon Board shall meet the qualifications of a Deacon as set forth in Article VII. Section 4.A.1. and shall have served at least one year on the Deacon Board.
  - b. Nomination and Election - Prior to the end of each Church year, the Deacon Board shall elect one of the Deacons to serve as chairperson for the next Church year.
  - c. Term of Office. The Chairperson of the Deacon Board shall serve for a term of one year. The Chairperson shall be ineligible for a period of one year after the completion of three one-year terms.
6. Relationship to Staff. The assigned pastor(s) or ministry staff member(s) shall be a voting member of the Deacon Board.
- B. Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall oversee the financial and accounting controls of VCBC in partnership with the staff person responsible for the financial and accounting functions of VCBC.
- 1. Qualifications. Members of the Finance Committee must have the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. A background in corporate finance or accounting is preferable.
  - 2. Nomination and Election. Each year the Nominating Committee shall nominate the appropriate number of candidates for election by the VCBC membership to the Finance Committee. This committee shall consist of six members including the Finance Committee Chairperson and staff member.
  - 3. Term of Office. Members of the Finance Committee shall serve for a term of two years and may be elected for three consecutive two year terms. A member may not serve for one year following the completion of three consecutive two-year terms.
  - 4. Responsibility and Authority. The responsibility of the Finance Committee is outlined as follows: (i) recommending to the Elder Board policies, procedures, systems and controls over all aspects of finance and accounting to include investment, receipts and disbursements of funds; (ii) recommending to the Elder Board the annual general fund budget and capital budgets and the systems to control compliance with all approved budgets; (iii) overseeing the process whereby periodic financial reports and financial statements (including audited annual financial statements) are provided as requested by the Elder Board; (iv) presenting the financial report

at each quarterly and annual Congregational Meeting; and (v) ensuring the maintenance of adequate insurance coverage.

5. Finance Committee Chairperson.
  - a. Qualification. The Finance Committee Chairperson must have the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. They must have a good knowledge of the total ministry of VCBC. A background in accounting or corporate finance is preferable.
  - b. Nomination and Election. The Nominating Committee shall nominate the appropriate non-staff candidate for election by the VCBC membership as Finance Committee Chairperson.
  - c. Term of Office. The Finance Committee Chairperson shall serve for a term of two years. The incumbent shall be eligible for election to three consecutive full terms of office, except as may be limited by Section B.3.
6. Relationship to Staff. The staff member who is responsible for accounting and financial affairs shall be a voting member of the Finance Committee.

C. World Outreach Committee. The World Outreach Committee shall assist the pastor responsible for World Outreach in the world missions activities of VCBC

1. Qualifications. Members of the World Outreach Committee must have a demonstrated interest and passion for missions and world evangelization. They must meet the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13.
2. Nomination and Election. Each year the Nominating Committee shall nominate the appropriate number of candidates for election by the VCBC membership to the World Outreach Committee. The number of committee members shall be that number which from time to time shall be recommended to the church by the Elder Board and approved by the membership.
3. Term of Office. Members of the World Outreach Committee shall serve for terms of two years and may be elected for three consecutive two year terms. A member may not serve for one year following the completion of three consecutive two-year terms.
4. Responsibility and Authority. (i) establishing criteria for giving to mission activities and organizations; (ii) selecting missions to support; (iii) preparing budgets for receipts and disbursements of world outreach funds, under the guidance of the Finance Committee and the Elder Board; and (iv) presenting mission reports at Congregational meetings.

5. World Outreach Committee Chairperson.
    - a. Qualifications. The World Outreach Committee Chairperson must have the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. They must have a good working knowledge of and a demonstrated passion for the World Outreach ministry of VCBC.
    - b. Nomination and Election - Prior to the end of each Church year, the World Outreach Committee shall elect one of its non-staff members to serve as chairperson for the next Church year.
    - c. Term of Office. The Chairperson of the World Outreach Committee shall serve for a term of one year and may be elected for three consecutive one year terms. A member may not serve for one year following the completion of three consecutive one-year terms.
  6. Relationship to Staff. The pastor or ministry staff member responsible for the World Outreach Ministry of VCBC shall be a voting member of this committee.
- D. Foundation Fund Committee. The Committee oversees the Foundation Fund, which is established to receive funds bequeathed to the church and funds gifted specifically to the fund through individuals' estate planning. Funds will not be held in perpetuity.
1. Qualifications. Committee members must meet the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. Each member must have significant background with the church's ministries and the ability for making wise judgments.
  2. Nomination and Election. The Foundation Fund Committee shall consist of five members of which three shall be elected. One member shall be appointed by the Elder Board from the Elder Board. One member shall be appointed by the Finance Committee from the Finance Committee. The Nominating Committee shall nominate the appropriate number of candidates for election by the VCBC membership. The Elder and Finance Committee members shall be voting members, but may not serve as Chairperson.
  3. Terms of Office. All elected members will serve for a term of two years. Terms are to be staggered. Elected members of the Foundation Fund Committee may serve three consecutive two-year terms. A member may not serve for one year following the completion of six consecutive years of service on this committee.
  4. Responsibility and Authority. The Foundation Fund Committee is responsible for leadership in overseeing the operations of the Foundation

Fund. Operations include: promotion, fund development, and facilitation of the process for spending decisions in accordance with VCBC policy. The Foundation Fund Committee recommends to the Elder Board policies for operation of the Foundation Fund. The oversight of the financial assets of the fund will operate in accordance with the policies, procedures and financial controls of VCBC. Funds will be spent to further the mission of VCBC, and such expenditures may be opportunistic and/or strategic. Funds will not be spent on activities normally funded through the annual budgeting process.

5. Foundation Fund Committee Chairperson.
    - a. Qualifications. The Chairperson must meet the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13 and shall have served at least one year on the Foundation Fund Committee.
    - b. Nomination and Election. The Nominating Committee shall nominate the appropriate non-staff candidate for election by the VCBC membership as Foundation Fund Committee Chairperson.
    - c. Term of Office. The Chairperson of the Foundation Fund Committee may serve for a term of one year. A member may not serve for one year following the completion of three consecutive one-year terms.
  6. Relationship to Staff. The Committee will work closely with the Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor on all matters and with individual ministry staff members on matters affecting their respective ministries. Spending decisions will be made through a collaborative process embracing church leadership and ministry-effected constituencies.
- E. Membership and Baptism Committee. The Membership and Baptism Committee will oversee the membership and baptism processes of the church in partnership with the ministry staff member responsible for Membership and Baptism.
1. Qualifications. Members of the Membership and Baptism Committee must have a demonstrated interest in and passion for the overall Discipleship ministry of VCBC. They must have the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13.
  2. Nomination and Election. Each year the Nominating Committee shall nominate the appropriate number of members for election by the VCBC membership to the Membership and Baptism Committee. This committee shall consist of six or more members, including the pastor responsible for overseeing the Membership and Baptism process of the church and a minimum of one Deacon selected by the Deacon Board. One member will be nominated to serve as committee Chair, and elected by the membership.

3. Terms of Office. Members of the Membership and Baptism Committee shall serve for a term of two years and may serve on the committee for three consecutive two-year terms. Terms are to be staggered. Members may not serve on the committee for one year following three consecutive two-year terms.
  4. Responsibility and Authority. The Membership and Baptism Committee shall oversee (i) the admission of candidates for membership and baptism; to include an interview with the candidate for baptism (ii) the teaching of all membership and baptism classes (iii) the maintenance of membership rolls and (iv) the recommendation of candidates for membership to the membership for confirmation.
  5. Membership and Baptism Committee Chairperson.
    - a. Qualifications. The Chairperson of the Membership and Baptism Committee shall meet the qualifications of a Deacon as set forth in VII. 4.A.1 and shall have served one year on the Membership and Baptism Committee.
    - b. Nomination and Election – The Nominating Committee shall nominate the chair of the Membership and Baptism Committee for election by the VCBC membership.
    - c. Term of Office. The Chairperson of the Membership and Baptism Committee shall serve for a term of one year. The Chairperson shall be ineligible for a period of one year after the completion of three one-year terms.
  6. Relationship to Staff. The pastor(s) or ministry staff member(s) responsible for overseeing the membership and baptism process of the church shall be a voting member of this committee.
- F. Standing Search Committee - The Standing Search Committee shall participate in conducting the searches to fill the position of Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor and shall review and recommend candidates for other positions as provided herein.
1. Qualifications – Members of the Standing Search Committee must meet the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. The committee members must have a good knowledge of the overall ministry of VCBC. A background in human resources is desirable.
  2. Nomination and Election. Each year the Nominating Committee shall nominate the appropriate number of non-staff candidates for election by the VCBC membership to the Standing Search Committee. This committee shall consist of at least three members, including one Chairperson, nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the membership.

3. Term of Office - Each member of the Standing Search Committee shall be elected for a term of two years and may be elected for three consecutive two year terms. A member may not serve on the Standing Search Committee for at least one year following the completion of three, two-year term.
4. Responsibility and Authority.
  - a. Senior/Executive Pastor Searches - When it becomes necessary to call a Senior Pastor or Executive Pastor, the Elder Board shall designate one of its members, and shall recommend and the membership shall confirm three lay members, all four to serve with the members of the Standing Search Committee as the Search Committee to fill such vacancy. All shall be voting members. The recommendation of the Search Committee concerning the call of a Senior Pastor or Executive Pastor and the terms of the call shall be presented to the membership of VCBC at a Congregational Meeting. Only one candidate shall be presented to the membership at one time. The vote to call a candidate shall be by ballot, and the affirmative vote of 80 percent of the votes cast shall be necessary to extend a call. The salary, benefits and working conditions for the candidate for the first year shall be approved by a majority vote.
  - b. Other Pastors and Ministry Staff Searches - For all other searches for staff referenced in Article VIII.F, the Executive Pastor will work collaboratively with Standing Search Committee to recommend a candidate to the Elder Board, which will have the authority to approve or reject the candidate. The Standing Search Committee is empowered to add to its number representatives of a ministry division for which the position being searched will serve. Such representatives will serve in an advisory capacity. For Pastors and Ministry Staff reporting to the Executive Pastor, such candidates shall be presented to the Congregation prior to the Elder Board meeting where the final hiring decision will be made.
5. Standing Search Committee Chairperson.
  - a. Qualifications. The Chairperson of the Standing Search Committee shall meet the qualifications set forth in Article VII.F.1.
  - b. Nomination and Election – The Nominating Committee shall nominate the chair of the Standing Search Committee for election by the VCBC membership.
  - c. Term of Office. The Chairperson of the Standing Search Committee shall serve for a term of one year and may be elected to serve three consecutive one year terms. The Chairperson shall be ineligible for a period of one year after the completion of three one-year terms.

6. Relationship with Staff. For all searches other than Senior and Executive Pastor, the Executive Pastor shall work in partnership with the Standing Search Committee.

G. The Elder Board may appoint such other committees as it may from time to time consider necessary or advisable.

Section 5. End of Term of Office. The normal term of office of each elected Board or committee member ends the first of the month following the Annual Church Congregational Meeting in order to coincide with the seating of the newly elected Boards and committees.

## Article VIII

### Staff

- A. Qualifications. All staff members shall be evangelical and baptistic in their convictions and shall ascribe to and support this Constitution. Each staff member shall be a member in good standing or shall agree to become a member when accepting his or her position.
- B. Term. All staff members shall serve an indeterminate term and shall be subject to dismissal as provided in this Article VIII.
- C. Resignation. Any Pastor, Ministry Staff member, or Other Employee may terminate his or her relationship with the church by giving notice of his or her resignation to the Elder Board or immediate supervisor. The resigning staff member shall be relieved of his or her duties on the effective date of such resignation or at such earlier time as the Elder Board may determine.
- D. Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall preach the Gospel, administer the ordinances and give vision and leadership to enable the church to fulfill its purpose. Organizationally, he shall report to the Elder Board and shall be accountable for the pastoral team and ministry staff of the church. The Senior Pastor may delegate responsibility for the oversight of the ministry staff to the Executive Pastor who will work closely with the Senior Pastor to ensure that the purpose of the church and related ministry plans are fulfilled. The Senior Pastor shall be a voting member of the Elder Board and shall be an *ex officio* member of all other boards and committees of the church and its auxiliary organizations except the Nominating Committee and the Standing Search Committee when that committee is seeking a new Senior Pastor.
1. Qualifications. The Senior Pastor shall be an ordained minister.
  2. The Senior Pastor may be dismissed by a majority vote at a Special Congregational Meeting called for the purpose, provided that a quorum is present at the time of the vote.
  3. If the Elder Board initiates the calling of the Special Congregational Meeting to dismiss the Senior Pastor and is defeated by the membership, all members of the Elder Board who supported the proposal shall automatically relinquish their office and shall not be eligible for any church office for a period of one year from the date of the vote.
- E. Executive Pastor
1. Qualifications. The Executive Pastor shall be an ordained minister.
  2. The Executive Pastor shall be responsible for the implementation of the church's vision and mission as articulated by the Senior Pastor and the Elder Board. He shall carry out the delegated assignments from the Senior Pastor regarding other Pastors and Ministry staff, along with the Senior Pastor, to ensure ministry plans are fulfilled,

coordinated, and in alignment with the vision of the church. He shall assist the Senior Pastor, when called upon, in administering the ordinances, and preaching the Gospel. The Executive Pastor shall be a non-voting member of the Elder Board and, organizationally, shall report to the Senior Pastor. The Elder Board may appoint the Executive Pastor to serve as an *ex officio* member of any committee that reports to the Elder Board with the exception of the Standing Search Committee when that committee is seeking a new Executive Pastor.

3. The Executive Pastor may be dismissed by the Senior Pastor with the consent of the Elder Board.

#### F. Other Pastors and Ministry Staff

1. Other Pastors and Ministry Staff shall assist the VCBC leadership in fulfilling its purpose, particularly in their areas of assigned responsibility. They shall assist the Senior Pastor, when called upon, in administering the ordinances, and preaching the Gospel if licensed to do so. The Elder Board may appoint other Pastors and Ministry Staff to be *ex officio* member of any committee that reports to the Elder Board. They shall report either directly to the Executive Pastor or to other supervisors established from time to time by the Elder Board. They shall lead those ministry responsibilities assigned to them at the time of their call, except as subsequently directed by the Executive Pastor, Senior Pastor or by the Elder Board.
2. Other Pastors and Ministry Staff may be dismissed by the Executive Pastor with the consent of both the Senior Pastor and the Elder Board.

#### G. Other Employees

1. Other Employees of VCBC shall assist the VCBC leadership in fulfilling its purpose particularly in their areas of assigned responsibility. They shall be hired by the appropriate Church staff member at such salaries, and with such benefits and working conditions in keeping with the Elder approved staffing plan of VCBC. These hires shall be approved by the Executive Pastor and Senior Pastor and shall be under the supervision of the responsible church staff as designated by the Executive Pastor and Senior Pastor.
2. Other employees may be dismissed by their direct supervisor with the consent of the Executive Pastor.

#### H. Description of Duties

The Elder Board shall cause to be presented to each employee a written position description of their duties and responsibilities.

## Article IX

### Public Worship, Meetings and Elections

- Section 1. Meetings of VCBC Congregation; Observance of the Lord's Supper
- A. The Congregation of VCBC shall meet each Sunday for public worship, and may schedule such other public worship and/or meetings as the Elder Board may deem necessary or desirable.
  - B. The Congregation of VCBC shall observe the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper at least once in each month.
- Section 2. Congregational Meetings
- A. Any matter of ordinary business requiring action by the VCBC membership may be considered and acted upon at any Annual, Quarterly or Special Congregational Meeting at which a quorum of the membership is present.
  - B. At Quarterly Congregational Meetings (including the Annual Congregational Meeting) as well as other Congregational Meetings a quorum of the membership shall consist of ten percent of the members in good standing who are eighteen years of age or older, exclusive of non-resident members. If a Congregational Meeting is called for the express purpose to consider the removal of the Senior Pastor, the quorum shall be fifty percent of the members in good standing who are eighteen years of age or older exclusive of non-resident members.
  - C. The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held each year in May or June. The agenda for the Annual Congregational Meeting shall include approval of all the budgets of VCBC and the election of Church officers. Since the fiscal year ends on May 31, the Elder Board is empowered to establish a provisional operating budget in order to cover the intervening time period if the Annual Congregational Meeting is held after the end of the fiscal year.
  - D. Any other budgetary matters shall be approved at Quarterly or Special Congregational Meetings.
  - E. Quarterly Congregational Meetings shall be held each year in September or October, November or December, and February or March.
  - F. Congregational Meetings, other than Quarterly or Annual meetings may be called at any time by the Church Chairman, the Senior Pastor or the Elder Board. Also Congregational Meetings shall be called by the Elder Board upon the written request of ten percent of the members in good standing who are eighteen years of age or older, exclusive of non-resident members. An exception is in the case of a meeting to consider the removal of the Senior Pastor as provided in Article VIII, Section D, where the Elder Board shall call such a meeting only upon the written request of

twenty percent or more of the members in good standing who are eighteen years of age or older, exclusive of non-resident members.

- G. Only members in good standing who are eighteen years of age or older may vote at any congregational meeting.
- H. The rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order Revised* shall govern all Congregational Meetings of VCBC in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution or any special rules of order of this Church.
- I. Voting on motions unrelated to elections to Church office shall be by voice or hand vote unless a written ballot requested by any member. Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, all matters shall be decided by a majority of the voting members in good standing in attendance. Voting by absentee ballot or proxy shall not be allowed.
- J. Certain types of business and spiritually significant transactions are of particular importance to the welfare of VCBC and warrant special consideration. These items require notification of the membership by letter at least two weeks in advance of any Congregational Meeting at which a vote will be taken:
  - 1. The call or dismissal of a Senior Pastor.
  - 2. The purchase, sale or mortgaging of Church real property. (Article X)
  - 3. Major alterations to Church real property.
  - 4. Amendments to the Constitution. (Article XIII)
  - 5. Meetings called to consider disciplinary action or termination of membership as part of Church discipline. (Article VI )
  - 6. All appeals from decisions of the Elder Board on disciplinary action or termination of membership. (Article VI)
  - 7. Consolidation or merger with another church. (Article XI.)
  - 8. Dissolution of VCBC. (Article XI.)
- K. Elections.
  - 1. Any member shall have the privilege to recommend candidates for nomination for any elected office. Such recommendation shall be done in accordance with the established processes of the Nominating Committee. To be admitted as a candidate, a person so recommended must meet the qualifications established by this Constitution as well as the procedures established by the Nominating Committee for the position to which is the person is recommended.

2. All elections shall be by written ballot, a majority of the votes cast being necessary for the election of any officer. If there is but one candidate for each office, the church may, by a unanimous vote, dispense with the written ballot.
  3. Vacancies occurring during the year may be filled for the unexpired term at any congregational meeting.
  4. All church officers elected or ratified at an Annual Congregational Meeting shall take office on the first of the month following the Annual Congregational Meeting, unless the office becomes vacant sooner or unless the membership decides otherwise at the time of the election. All church officers elected at a Quarterly Congregational Meeting or at a Special Congregational Meeting shall take office immediately, unless the membership decides otherwise at the time of the election.
- L. Resignation of Elected Officials and Removal from Office.
1. Resignation by an elected official shall be in writing to the Church Chairman and shall be effective on the date specified.
  2. Any elected official who ceases to be a member in good standing shall be considered to have vacated his or her position. Any member elected or appointed to a church board, committee or other organization who fails to attend regular meetings of the group without reasonable cause or engages in inappropriate conduct shall be subject to discipline under Article VI, Section 4.B, including removal from office.

## **Article X**

### **Finances**

Finances necessary to support the ministry and activities of VCBC, including operating funds, capital and building funds, and funds for missions, shall be obtained through voluntary tithes and offerings. The Elder Board may authorize appeals for funds, and may invite Church members and attenders to pledge their anticipated tithes and offerings in order to present a realistic budget to the membership. Church approved ministries and activities will be financed out of the VCBC treasury. Every conveyance, sale or mortgage of VCBC's real property must be ratified by the membership of VCBC. Expenditures for any one item in any one fiscal year not provided for in the budget and greater than one half of one percent of the total general budget shall not be made without an affirmative vote of the members at a congregational meeting.

## **Article XI**

### **Consolidation, Merger, Dissolution or Division**

#### Section 1. Consolidation or Merger

Should it become advisable for VCBC to consolidate or merge with another Church that is a member of Converge Worldwide (formerly the Baptist General Conference), the Elder Board shall negotiate the terms and conditions of the consolidation or merger. The consolidation or merger agreement reached by the Elder Board shall not become effective unless approved by a vote of two-thirds of the members in good standing, who are eighteen years of age or older, in attendance at any Congregational Meeting called for the purpose, provided that a quorum is present at the time of the vote.

#### Section 2. Dissolution

Should it become impossible for the work of VCBC to continue, all property of VCBC shall be transferred to the Converge Worldwide (Baptist General Conference) or Converge Northeast (Northeast Baptist Conference), as the Elder Board shall determine.

#### Section 3. Division

In the event of an organic division of the VCBC membership, the matter shall be resolved in accordance with this Constitution. Should controversy arise as to the interpretation of this Constitution, the question shall be submitted to the Trustees of Converge Northeast (formerly Northeast Baptist Conference) and their decision shall be final.

## **Article XII**

### **Licensing and Ordination**

#### Section 1. Licensing

Licenses to preach may be granted to qualified members of the VCBC pastoral or ministry staff by vote of the VCBC membership at any Congregational Meeting, upon the recommendation of the Elder Board. VCBC shall follow its approved policies procedures.

Licenses to minister may be granted to qualified persons by vote of the VCBC membership at any Congregational Meeting upon the recommendation of the Elder Board. These individuals are ineligible to be ordained or licensed to preach. VCBC shall follow its approved policies and procedures.

#### Section 2. Ordination

Ordination may be granted to qualified members of the VCBC pastoral or ministry staff by vote of the VCBC membership at any Membership Meeting, upon the recommendation of the Elder Board. VCBC shall follow its Ordination Policy and the procedures of the Converge Worldwide (Baptist General Conference) on examination and ordination.

## **Article XIII**

### **Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members in attendance at any Congregational Meeting, provided that a quorum is present at the time of the vote. Reference Article IX, Section J