

VALLEY CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.

Elizabethtown, Kentucky

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS Proposed Revision for December 2026

Document History

- Constitution adopted 10-16-02
 - Bylaws adopted 11-19-03
 - Article I (Membership) adopted 11-13-02; revised 12-13-23
 - Other components adopted/revised as listed in church records
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CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We declare and establish this Constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and so that this body may be governed in an orderly manner. This Constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches of the same faith.

Article 1. Name

This body shall be known as **Valley Creek Baptist Church, Inc.**, located in Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

Article 2. Statement of Faith

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of **The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)** as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, personally committed to sharing the good

news of salvation to lost mankind and helping to mature those won into the fullness of Christ.

The ordinances of the church are **baptism by immersion of believers** and **the Lord's Supper**.

Article 3. Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our 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, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We commit to upholding family and personal devotions with sincerity; to provide our children with a strong religious education; to seek the salvation of our relatives and friends; to live thoughtfully and with integrity in the world; to conduct our dealings with fairness, honor our commitments, and lead by example in our behavior; to avoid gossip, slander, and uncontrolled anger; to abstain from the use and sale of alcoholic beverages; and to passionately work toward advancing the mission of our Savior's kingdom.

This body of believers holds that Scripture calls us to live holy and temperate lives, avoiding anything that would impair our judgment or lead us into sin. While the Bible does not prohibit the consumption of alcohol, we strongly discourage its use due to the potential for abuse and the harm it can cause to individuals, families, and communities. The consumption of alcoholic beverages, especially in excess, can lead to drunkenness, which is clearly condemned in Scripture (Ephesians 5:18).

In addition to alcohol, we also oppose the use of recreational drugs and any other substances that impair our physical or mental faculties. We believe that such substances can enslave the body and mind, leading individuals away from God's will and purpose for their lives. As followers of Christ, we are called to exercise self-control, to honor God with our bodies, and to live in a way that is a witness to others (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

We encourage all believers to be cautious about substances that could lead to addiction or interfere with their relationship with God. We also urge our church to support those who struggle with substance abuse through compassion, counseling, and accountability. Our ultimate goal is to live in a way that glorifies God and leads

others to the transforming power of the gospel.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; and to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Article 4. Character

Section 1. Polity

The government of this church is vested in the body of members (Article 1) who compose it. Administration and implementation of church purposes shall be conducted through church council, ministerial staff, and leadership teams as defined herein after. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Lincoln Association of Baptists, the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Section 2. Doctrine

This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with other Southern Baptist churches.

Section 3. Marriage and Sexuality

1. We believe marriage is ordained by God, and that the term "marriage" carries only one meaning as defined in Scripture: the sacred union of **one man and one woman**, bound together in a covenant commitment for life. However, we also recognize that in cases of adultery, abandonment, or other biblically justified circumstances, divorce may be permissible, though not ideal. We believe God's grace is available to those who have experienced divorce, and they are welcomed and encouraged to seek healing, restoration, and reconciliation through Christ.
2. We believe God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other.
3. We believe any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexual conduct, bisexual conduct, incest, pornography, or any attempt to change one's sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

4. To preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ and to provide a biblical role model to members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, all members, and all volunteers abide by and agree to this Statement of Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.
5. We believe every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity in accordance with biblical teachings.
6. We believe God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Scripture references: Gen 1:26–28; 2:18–25; 3:1–20; Lev 18:22; Deut 6; Josh 24:15; Ps 51:5; 78:1–8; 128; 139:13–16; Prov 5:15–20; 6:20–22; 12:4; 14:1; 18:22; 24:3; 31:10–31; Eccl 4:9–12; 9:9; Mal 2:14–16; Matt 5:31–32; 19:3–9; Mark 10:6–12; Rom 1:18–32; 1 Cor 6:9–20; Eph 5:21–33; Titus 2:3–8; Heb 13:4.

BYLAWS

Article I. Membership

Section 1. General

Valley Creek Baptist Church is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. Candidacy

Any person may offer himself/herself as a candidate for membership at any service of the church. All candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular worship service for membership in any of the following ways, after due examination by the church as to their Christian experience:

1. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
2. By promise of a letter from another Baptist church which practices baptism by immersion and is doctrinally in accord with The Baptist Faith and Message.

3. By statement of prior conversion experience and subsequent baptism by immersion when no letter is obtainable.

Should there be any question regarding the sincerity of the candidate, such question shall be referred to the **Senior Pastor** and **Deacon Body** for investigation. They shall bring a recommendation to the church at the next scheduled business meeting. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of those present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

New members will be encouraged to participate in the church's new member orientation program.

Section 3. Rights and Responsibilities of Members

Every member, subject to these bylaws, is eligible for consideration as a candidate for elective offices in the church.

Every member may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

On all matters that come before the church for action, every member present is entitled to one vote.

Members should understand the responsibilities of membership include:

- Regular participation in worship and church life
- Participation in the church mission and ministries
- Faithful giving to the church and its missions
- Living a faithful Christian lifestyle

Extenuating circumstances (such as physical disability) shall be considered by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Body.

Section 4. Discipline

Should any unhappy differences arise among members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in Matthew 18. In all cases, a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance shall pervade the proceedings. Since the church has the right to accept individuals for membership, it must also have the freedom to discipline; therefore, in cases of grave difficulty, the church may admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in its membership.

Section 5. Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated in any of the following ways:

1. Personal request of the member.
2. Transfer of letter to another church.
3. Verified union with another church.
4. Removal for cause on biblical grounds as a result of church discipline.
5. Death of a member.
6. Inactivity

Inactive Membership Process. The process shall be determined by the Church Council and designated committee. The church shall be informed of membership roll updates at the annual business meeting (or other regular business meeting as needed).

Article II. Church Leadership

Employment by the church does not require church membership unless specifically stated in these bylaws or required for a particular ministerial position. All church leadership is subject to vetting.

Section 1. Senior Pastor

A. Role of the Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall serve as the spiritual leader of the church and shall be responsible for leading the congregation in functioning as a New Testament church. The Senior Pastor shall provide leadership to the congregation, church organizations, and staff in the fulfillment of the church's mission and ministry.

The Senior Pastor shall give primary attention to the ministry of the Word, prayer, worship leadership, pastoral care, evangelism, and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11–12).

B. Calling of a Senior Pastor

When the church is without a Senior Pastor, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. **Formation of a Search Team.** The Nominating Team shall nominate for church approval a Pastor Search Team consisting of no fewer than seven (7) members, including at least one (1) representative from the **Deacon Body**, one (1) representative from the **Personnel Team**, and one (1) representative from the

Finance Team. Upon election by the church, the Search Team shall be authorized to seek, evaluate, and recommend a candidate.

2. **Qualifications and Investigation.** Before recommending any candidate, the Search Team shall thoroughly investigate. The Search Team shall conduct its work in prayer and dependence upon the Lord considering the following:
 - a. Scriptural qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9)
 - b. Christian character and moral integrity
 - c. Ministerial ability and leadership gifts
 - d. Doctrinal alignment and cooperative support of the Southern Baptist Convention
3. **Ordination Requirement.** No candidate shall be considered who is not ordained by a Southern Baptist church or is not willing to submit to ordination by a Southern Baptist church.
4. **Single Candidate Consideration.** The church shall consider and vote on only one candidate at a time.
5. **Call Meeting and Vote.** A special business meeting shall be called after the candidate's credentials are presented and at least ten (10) day notice has been provided. Election requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present and voting by secret ballot. (As used herein, notice shall be either digital, printed, or by publication.)
6. **Term of Service and Resignation.** The Senior Pastor shall be called for an indefinite term. Resignation shall be by written notice to the church; unless otherwise mutually agreed, at least two (2) weeks' notice shall be provided.
7. **Removal / Declaration of Vacancy.** A Senior Pastor position may be declared vacant by:
 - a. Recommendation by the Personnel Team to the church
 - b. A duly called business meeting with at least ten (10) day notice
 - c. A two-thirds (2/3) vote by secret ballot of members present and voting
8. **Severance and Compensation.** Except in cases of gross moral failure, criminal misconduct, or doctrinal deviation warranting immediate removal, the church shall provide severance compensation equal to not less than two paid periods, paid within thirty (30) days unless otherwise agreed.

Section 2. Church Council

A. Purpose and Authority

The Church Council is the primary administrative body overseeing day-to-day

operational decisions, subject to congregational authority and these bylaws. The Council provides direction, coordination, and oversight to teams and officers to align mission, ministry, and resources with church priorities, adopted policies, and the approved budget.

The Council may act on routine administrative matters and budgeted expenditures consistent with the approved budget and policies. Matters reserved to the congregation require church approval, including (at minimum): calling/dismissal of ministerial staff, adopting the annual budget, incurring indebtedness, purchasing/selling/encumbering real property, and amendments.

B. Composition

The Church Council shall consist of:

1. Senior Pastor (Chair)
2. Pastoral Staff
3. Finance Team Chair
4. Treasurer
5. Trustees Chair
6. Personnel Team Chair
7. Deacons Chair

The Senior Pastor shall serve as Chair. In the absence of a Senior Pastor, the Council shall designate one of its members to serve as Chair until a Senior Pastor is called or returns.

Other team chairs/ministry leaders may be invited in an advisory capacity when their areas are discussed. The Moderator may participate as ex-officio, non-voting unless otherwise elected as a voting member.

C. Responsibilities

The Council shall:

1. Provide overall administrative oversight of operations.
2. Coordinate and review the work of teams and ministry leaders.
3. Ensure teams operate within approved budgets and policies.

4. Establish and recommend procedures needed for effective administration.
5. Address timely matters between business meetings.
6. Ensure stewardship and resource alignment in cooperation with Finance and Trustees.
7. Meetings will be held quarterly (at minimum) and called at the direction of the Senior Pastor or Chair.

Report actions regularly to the church.

Section 3. Church Staff

A. General Provisions

The church shall call or employ such staff members, including ministerial and non-ministerial staff, as are necessary to carry out the mission and ministries of the church. A written job description shall be prepared when a position is established. Staff serve under the general supervision of the Senior Pastor, with administrative oversight by the Personnel Team.

B. Ministerial Staff

Ministerial staff are positions for which the church requires evidence of a personal call to ministry (e.g., Associate Pastor, Family Pastor, Youth Minister, Minister of Music, Minister of Education, other ministerial staff).

1. **Selection.** A Search Team shall be formed in a manner consistent with the process outlined for the Senior Pastor, unless otherwise determined by the church.
2. **Election.** A two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present and voting at a duly called business meeting is required, with at least ten (10) day notice.
3. **Resignation.** Requires written notice unless otherwise mutually agreed upon between personnel committee and the resigning ministerial staff. Written two (2) weeks notice.
4. **Removal.** Recommendation shall ordinarily originate with the Personnel Team (after consultation with the Senior Pastor, or with the Church Council if the Senior Pastor is involved/absent), followed by a duly called business meeting with ten (10) day notice and a two-thirds (2/3) vote by secret ballot. Severance provisions, if any, shall be determined in accordance with church personnel policies.

C. Non-Ministerial Staff

1. **Hiring Authority.** The Personnel Team shall have authority to hire non-ministerial staff consistent with approved job descriptions, the approved budget, and established personnel policies, after consultation with the supervising staff member. The church shall be informed at the next regular business meeting.
2. **Termination Authority.** The Personnel Team shall have authority to terminate non-ministerial staff consistent with personnel policies, with consultation as appropriate. The church shall be informed at the next regular business meeting, unless confidentiality considerations require otherwise.
3. **Supervision.** Non-ministerial staff serve under the direct supervision designated in their job description.

Section 4. Deacons

A. Purpose and Function. Deacons serve as ministering servants of the church (Acts 6:1–6; 1 Timothy 3:8–13). Deacons are servant leaders and shall not function as administrators or as a governing board of the church. Final authority rests with the congregation except as delegated by these bylaws. The Deacon Body serves under the leadership of the Senior Pastor to support the ministry of the Word through care, encouragement, unity, and service.

B. Qualifications. Must meet Scriptural qualifications (Acts 6:3–8; 1 Tim 3:8–13). Additionally deacons must be at least 18 years of age and a member for at least one year with demonstrated faithful service and maturity.

C. Election and Term.

1. Each year the Deacon Body shall prayerfully consider candidates and recommend qualified candidates to the church at the annual December business meeting.
2. Election requires two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present and voting.
3. Term is three (3) years with rotation; eligibility and vacancy provisions as you wrote (kept).

D. Ordination. Those not previously ordained shall be examined and presented to the church for ordination.

E. Transfer Policy. A deacon transferring from another church is not automatically an active deacon; must meet qualifications, be recommended by the Deacon Body, and elected by the church.

Section 5. Moderator/Assistant Moderator

The Moderator and Assistant Moderator, elected annually, shall be non-staff members presented by the Nominating Team. The Moderator shall preside at all business meetings and perform other duties as assigned. In the absence of the Moderator, the Assistant Moderator shall preside. In the absence of both, the **Senior Pastor** shall call the church to order and preside for the purpose of electing an acting Moderator.

Section 6. Clerk

The Clerk, elected annually, shall be non-staff members presented by the Nominating Team. The Clerk shall maintain an accurate and permanent record of all official actions of the church in a suitable and secure format. The Clerk shall work in cooperation with the Membership Committee to maintain an updated membership roll, including dates of admission, dismissal, transfer, death, or removal, together with a record of baptisms.

The Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal as authorized by vote of the church and shall work in cooperation with the Office Administrator in the preparation and processing of such correspondence. The Clerk shall preserve all official communications and written reports and shall provide required meeting notices as specified in these bylaws.

The Clerk shall work with the Office Administrator in preparing and submitting the Annual Church Profile and any other required reports.

Section 7. Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

The Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer elected annually, shall be non-staff members presented by the Nominating Team. The treasurer/assistant treasurer will serve as the financial officers. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Finance Team. The Treasurer shall oversee and help ensure that all financial processes are conducted in an orderly, transparent, and accountable manner consistent with adopted budgets and policies.

The Treasurer shall:

1. Monitor and review financial reports.
2. Help ensure appropriate internal controls and safeguards.
3. Confirm disbursements are made according to church authorization.
4. Report regularly to the church regarding financial condition.

The Treasurer may, but is not required to, participate in counting, depositing, or disbursing funds, including check signing, as determined by The Finance Team. The Finance Team shall maintain written procedures that provide appropriate separation of duties and accountability safeguards.

All monies shall be counted by at least two unrelated persons, deposited promptly, and

disbursed only upon proper authorization. An audit or financial review may be conducted annually and/or upon termination of service by persons not directly involved in routine handling of funds. The Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer shall be bonded.

Section 8. Trustees

The church shall elect nine (9) Trustees, one-third (1/3) annually for three (3) year terms, nominated by the Nominating Team. Trustees serve as legal representatives of the church regarding property and act only upon authorization granted by the church. Trustees shall not buy, sell, lease, mortgage, transfer, or encumber church property without a specific vote of the church.

Emergency Property Matters. In unforeseen emergencies requiring immediate action to protect life/safety or prevent substitute property damage, Trustees may authorize necessary repairs not previously budgeted, consulting the Finance Team and Senior Pastor whenever reasonably possible. Actions shall be reported at the next business meeting. Any emergency spending thresholds and approval steps shall be governed by church financial policies. This emergency authority does not extend to sale, mortgage, or encumbrance of property.

Section 9. Other Officers

Other officers may be established as needed. Such officers shall be nominated by the Nominating Team and elected by the church unless otherwise specified. Duties, term, and scope shall be clearly defined at the time established. No office shall be created with authority inconsistent with these bylaws or congregational governance.

Article III. Teams

Section 1. Standing Teams and Terms

The church shall maintain standing Teams: Nominating Team, Personnel Team, and Finance Team. Additional regular or special Teams may be established by the church or by recommendation of the Church Council. All Team members shall be church members, nominated by the Nominating Team and elected by the church unless otherwise specified. Teams shall consist of at least three (3) members serving three-year rotating terms, with approximately one-third (1/3) elected annually. The church office shall maintain an up-to-date listing of Teams and terms.

Section 2. Ex-Officio Members (Global Rule)

The **Senior Pastor** (or pastoral designee) may serve as an ex-officio member of Teams and other bodies. Ex-officio members may attend meetings and participate in

discussion but shall not vote unless otherwise specified by these bylaws or by church action.

Section 3. Nominating Team

The Nominating Team shall coordinate staffing of volunteer leadership positions and nominations for officers and Teams. The Nominating Team shall:

1. Prayerfully evaluate needs and nominees.
2. Ensure nominees meet qualifications.
3. Present nominees to the church for election.
4. Nominate replacements to fill unexpired terms as needed.
The Nominating Team may be directed by the church or Church Council to nominate members for temporary/special Teams.

Section 4. Personnel Team

The Personnel Team shall oversee employed personnel administration, including staff needs, job descriptions, compensation structures, benefits, personnel policies, and related matters unless otherwise specified. The Personnel Team shall coordinate with the Finance Team as appropriate for compensation and budget alignment.

Section 5. Finance Team

The Finance Team shall oversee financial planning and stewardship strategy, including developing and recommending an annual budget (through the Church Council to the church), monitoring performance, recommending financial policies/internal controls, stewardship initiatives, and working with the Treasurer to ensure regular reporting. The Finance Team shall not independently authorize expenditures beyond the approved budget except as permitted by **written financial policies** and Church Council direction.

Article IV. Other Organizational Leadership

Section 1. Ministry Teams

The church may establish standing or temporary Ministry Teams as needed. Ministry Teams operate under administrative oversight of the Church Council, **within approved budgets and policies**, and shall report as requested to the Council or church. Members shall be nominated/elected unless otherwise specified.

Section 2. Church Organizations

The Church Council may organize ministry programs/classes/structures as needed. All organizations operate under church authority and administrative oversight of the Church Council. Leaders shall be approved in a manner consistent with these bylaws and operate within policies and budgets. No organization shall operate independently of the church or contrary to these bylaws.

Article V. Church Meetings

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly for corporate worship, preaching, prayer, instruction, evangelism, and the worship of Almighty God. Regular services shall ordinarily be held on Sundays and at such other times as determined by church leadership.

Section 2. Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly, ordinarily monthly, and at other times as determined by the Senior Pastor in consultation with church leadership.

Section 3. Business Meetings

The current edition of **Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised** shall serve as the authority for parliamentary procedure for business meetings of the church and meetings of the Deacons, Trustees, Church Council, and Teams unless otherwise specified.

A quorum shall consist of members present at any regular or properly called business meeting. Each member present is entitled to one vote.

The Church Council shall prepare the agenda for regular business meetings.

The church shall hold an annual business meeting in December for adopting the annual budget, electing officers and Team members, receiving reports, and conducting other necessary business.

For matters of significant importance (including but not limited to budget adoption, calling/dismissal of ministerial staff, real property actions, incurring indebtedness beyond the approved budget, and amendments), notice shall be given at least ten (10) days in advance by reasonable means (public announcement, written communication, electronic distribution, etc.).

Special Business Meetings. A special business meeting may be called by the Moderator, the Senior Pastor, or the Church Council. Ten (10) day notice shall state

time, place, and purpose. Only the business specified in the notice shall be considered.

Section 4. Church Year

January 1 through December 31.

Section 5. Fiscal Year

January 1 through December 31.

Article VI. Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution or Bylaws may be made at any regular or properly called business meeting, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing and notice has been given to the membership at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which action is to be taken. Notice may be given by public announcement, written communication, electronic distribution, or other reasonable means. Copies of proposed amendments shall be made available to the membership prior to the vote through appropriate means.

Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present and voting. No amendment shall be adopted that conflicts with the Articles of Incorporation or applicable law.

Article VII. Cemetery

The Valley Creek Baptist Church Cemetery shall be owned and operated by the church. The church shall adopt and maintain a separate Cemetery Policy governing administration, financial management, and regulations. Such policy may be amended in accordance with procedures established by the church.

Article VIII. Church Daycare Ministry

Section 1. Establishment

Valley Creek Baptist Church may operate a weekday daycare ministry ("Daycare") as an extension of the church's mission to serve families and the community. The Daycare shall function as a ministry of the church and shall not operate as a separate legal entity unless authorized by the church.

Section 2. Oversight and Accountability

The Daycare shall operate under the administrative oversight and the general spiritual leadership of the Church Council.

The Church Council shall ensure that the Daycare operates in alignment with the mission, values, and policies of the church.

The church shall adopt and maintain a separate Daycare Policy governing administration, financial management, and regulations. Such policy may be amended in accordance with procedures established by the church.