

## CONSTITUTION

### Valleybrook Community Church Affiliated with Converge Worldwide (Formerly the Baptist General Conference)

#### Article 1.

#### NAME

The name of this organization shall be: "Valleybrook Community Church", affiliated with Converge Worldwide (formerly the Baptist General Conference and the Midwest Baptist Conference).

#### Article 2.

#### MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior, and having been baptized by immersion as a believer, and being in agreement with Valleybrook's Vision, Purpose, Values, and Affirmation of Faith, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Valleybrook church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

##### 1. I will protect the unity of my church

- ... by acting in love toward other members
- ... by refusing to gossip and avoiding unkind words and unrighteous anger
- ... by being slow to take offense and always ready for reconciliation
- ... by giving and receiving correction and with gentleness

(Romans 14:19) Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

(Ephesians 4:29) Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

(Ephesians 4:32) Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

(Ephesians 4:2) Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

##### 2. I will share the responsibility of my church

- ... by praying for its growth
- ... by investing in relationships with the unchurched and inviting them to attend
- ... by intentionally developing loving relationships with believers
- ... by generously giving of my time, treasure, and talents

(1 Thessalonians 1:1-2) Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you. <sup>2</sup>We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.

(Luke 14:23) Then the master told his servant, "Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full."

(Romans 15:7) Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

(2 Corinthians 9:6-7) Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup> Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

### **3. I will serve the ministry of my church**

... by discovering my gifts and talents

... by serving in a ministry of the church as the Spirit leads

... by developing a servant's heart

(1 Peter 4:10) Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

(1 Corinthians 12:27) Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

(Philippians 2:3-4,7) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others ... but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

### **4. I will support the testimony of my church**

... by attending faithfully its services and ordinances

... by living a godly life

... by warmly welcoming visitors

... by supporting the direction and discipline of the leaders

(Hebrews 10:25) Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

(Philippians 1:27) Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.

(Colossians 4:5) Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

(Hebrews 13:17) Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

## **Article 3.**

## **THE AFFIRMATION OF OUR 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.

### **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.

### **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, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

### **4. 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 visible return to earth.

### **5. The Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, 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 an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

### **6. Regeneration**

We believe that all men 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.

### **7. The Church**

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated personnel 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.

### **8. Christian Conduct**

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellowmen; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

### **9. Christian Marriage**

We believe that Christian marriage is a sacred institution ordained by God for the wellbeing of mankind and the propagation of the human race. It is the spiritual and physical union of one man and one woman according to Scripture.

## **10. 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 our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **11. Religious Liberty**

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith. We believe that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions with each fulfilling its own duties.

## **12. Church Cooperation**

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by operation with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a 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. Church may likewise cooperate with inter-denominational fellowships on a voluntary basis.

## **13. 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.

## **Article 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND VISION**

The purpose of Valleybrook Church is to exalt God, evangelize the lost, and edify one another - to reach up, reach out, and reach in.

Our vision is to glorify God by **"helping people find and follow God."**

## **Article 5. MEMBERSHIP**

### **1. Admission**

- a. A profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord with the desire to continually grow as a Christian.
- b. Believer's baptism by immersion.
- c. Embracing of Valleybrook's Vision, Purpose, Values, Membership Covenant, and Affirmation of Faith.
- d. A desire to invest of one's time, talents, and treasures into the Valleybrook community.
- e. Support of the direction and discipline of the leadership of Valleybrook.

### **2. Application and Procedure for Membership**

All applicants for membership in the church shall appear before the Pastor or elders for consultation and examination. Notice will be given listing the candidates for two weeks in the church bulletin. If no concerns are raised during the two-week period, the applicants will be received into membership at any future worship service.

### **3. Severance of Membership**

a. Dismissal: Any member who persists in conduct unbecoming to a Christian or habitually neglects his church obligations shall be counseled and kindly admonished by other believers and possibly the elders. If this counsel and admonition fails to restore the offender, he may be dismissed from the church membership by the elders. Some disciplinary action may involve informing the rest of the church members of an offender's behavior as mentioned in Matthew 18:17.

b. Withdrawal: Any member wishing to withdraw his membership may do so by written request to the elders.

### **4. Active and Inactive Members**

Members of this church that have not attended for 1 year will be considered inactive unless specified by the elders after interviewing the member and concluding that their lack of attendance was unavoidable. These inactive members will not be allowed to vote either in person or by absentee ballot. Inactive members can be reactivated after attending on a regular basis, asking to be reinstated, and being approved by the elders

## **Article 6.**

### **PASTORAL RELATIONS**

#### **1. Establishment of Relationship**

The calling of a senior pastor shall be done in all cases by ballot, by a three-fourths majority of the voting members at a business meeting, announcement of which has been given at the services on the preceding Sunday. Each candidate shall be considered individually and shall be voted upon before another candidate is considered. A pulpit committee shall consist of representatives of the elders and at least two ministry leaders who will choose one additional member-at-large from the church membership. Each member of the pulpit committee has one vote. They shall select and present the candidate to the church body.

#### **2. Dissolution of Relationship**

The question of dissolving pastoral relationship shall be considered at any time by the church on presentation of the pastor's resignation; or where grievance exists against the pastor, based on petition signed by at least 10% of the active members but no less than 12 members. This petition must be brought before the church along with the recommendation by the elders. In this case the pastoral relationship shall be dissolved by ballot by two-thirds of the voting membership at a business meeting notice of which has been given to the members in writing, at least two weeks before the business meeting, and the object of which shall be stated in such notice.

a. The Pastor, upon resignation, shall terminate his relationship with the church in a mutually agreeable time, trying not to exceed sixty days.

b. The church, upon written notice by the elders, shall terminate its relationship with the Pastor immediately. This termination shall include sixty days' salary.

## **Article 7.**

### **MEETINGS**

#### **1. Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting of the church shall be held as near the time of the new fiscal year as possible.

## **2. Special Meetings**

Special meeting of the church may be held at any time by order of the elders or the Pastor. All business meetings shall be conducted in an orderly fashion with the participants endeavoring to show forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

## **3. Calling a Meeting**

A meeting is duly called when it is made public in a church publication such as the church bulletin, news letter, special letter, or by phone calling 10 days prior to the meeting.

## **4. Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of whichever voting members attend a duly publicized and called meeting. Unless otherwise specified in this document, ordinary matters of business can be conducted with a quorum as defined above and with a two-thirds vote of those present.

## **5. Absentee Ballot**

Absentee ballots may be cast by those desiring to cast their vote but who cannot be present because of unavoidable circumstances. Only active members as determined by the elders would be able to cast an absentee ballot.

## **6. Meeting Chair**

All meetings of the church will be chaired by the pastor or a representative of the elders.

## **7. Voting members**

Voting members shall be 18 years and over, except in legal matters where the voting age shall be 21.

## **Article 8.**

## **AUTHORITIES, DUTIES AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. Congregational Authority**

The congregation has final voting approval on these areas which help to shape the direction of the church: major legal matters (such as purchase or sale of property), ratifying the budget, the calling of a Pastor, approval of elders, and amending this document.

### **B. Church Leadership**

#### **1. Active Status**

The Pastor(s), Elders, and Ministry Leaders, shall be active members of the church. All teachers and regular members of the worship team are to be members or in the process of becoming members.

#### **2. The Church Leadership**

The church leadership is comprised of the Pastor(s), Elders, and Ministry Leaders. Their purpose is to guide, direct and coordinate the ministries of the church body.

#### **3. Pastor**

The Pastor shall perform all the Scriptural duties of his office and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit shall have freedom of the pulpit. He shall be an ex-officio voting member of all organizations and committees. All paid staff report directly to him or his appointee.

#### 4. Elders

a. Each year before the annual meeting, nominations for elders will be given to the elders for consideration. These nominations will generally come from this leadership group, but can be brought from any active member of the church. It is up to the discretion of the elders whether to bring that name to the church for confirmation. Many factors might prevent such a recommendation including: the required Biblical Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9), a need to limit the size of the group, or the individual's ability to focus on the spiritual concerns of the church rather than the tasks. Including the Pastor as a member of the group, it is preferable that this group should not fall below three people. The elder term is three years and may be renewed an indefinite number of times upon pastoral and congregational approval.

b. Elders will be limited to a group of spiritually qualified men whose primary focus is on the spiritual concerns and not the tasks of the church. However, should the elders believe it necessary, they may become as involved as needed in order to guard the direction of the church. In conjunction with the Ministry Leaders, they will oversee the preparation of a budget and help the congregation establish annual goals.

c. Any elder shall have authority to sign any legal papers as a representative of the entire group upon their agreement.

d. The question of dissolving the relationship with an elder shall be considered at any time by the church on presentation of the elder's resignation, or where grievance exists against the elder based on petition signed by at least 10% of the active members but no less than 12 members. This petition must be brought before the church along with the recommendation by the Pastor. In this case the elder's relationship shall be dissolved by ballot by two thirds of the meeting's qualified membership, at a business meeting, notice of which has been given to the members in writing at least two weeks before the business meeting: the object of which shall be stated in such notice. An Elder must be confirmed for his three-year term at a Business Meeting by two thirds of those attending the meeting.

#### Article 9.

#### CONVERGE WORLDWIDE RELATIONS

##### A. Dissolution

The church is affiliated with Converge Worldwide (formerly the Midwest Baptist Conference, of the Baptist General Conference). Should this church cease to exist as a corporate body, then all of its property, appurtenances, and effects then owned or held by it shall insure to the benefit of and become the property of the district corporation of Converge Worldwide within which jurisdiction this church is located and with which it is affiliated by law.

##### B. Division

In case of organic division of the church membership, the church property shall belong to those members who abide by this constitution. Should any controversy arise as to who is abiding by this constitution, the question shall be submitted to the Executive Board of Converge Worldwide, and their decision shall be final.

**Article 10.**

**AMENDING THIS DOCUMENT**

Amending of this document requires a two-thirds vote of those attending a duly called congregational meeting after the changes have been made known for a period of 10 days.