



The Constitution
of
Valley Brook Community Church
Granby, Connecticut

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OF
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Granby, Connecticut**

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**CONSTITUTION
OF
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Granby, Connecticut**

ARTICLE I

Name and Organization

The name of the Corporation is VALLEY BROOK COMMUNITY CHURCH. This Corporation will be further referred to in the Bylaws as the "Church." The Church maintains its principal office 10 Hartford Avenue in Granby, Connecticut. The Elders of the Church shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another. Any change of this location shall be recorded by the Secretary on these bylaws opposite this section, or this section may be amended to state the new location.

ARTICLE II

Statement of Purpose

Purpose

The purpose of the Church is to glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commandment (*Matthew 22:36-40*) and the Great Commission (*Matthew 28:18-20*).

1. WORSHIP - "To participate in public worship services together and to maintain personal daily devotions." (*John 4:24*)
2. FELLOWSHIP - "To encourage, support and pray for each other as members of the family of God. To share our lives together." (*I John 1:7; Acts 2:44-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Romans 15:5,7; John 13:34-35*)
3. DISCIPLESHIP/EDUCATION - "To help members develop toward full Christian maturity and train them for effective ministry. To promote personal, spiritual growth and discipleship through Bible teaching." (*Ephesians 4:11-13; Matthew 18:20; 2 Timothy 2:2*)
4. MINISTRY/SERVICE - "To serve unselfishly, in Jesus' name meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those in our Church, community and in the world." (*1 Peter 4:10-11; Matthew 25:34-40; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Galatians 5:13*)
5. EVANGELISM/MISSION - "To share the good news of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible in our community and throughout the world." (*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8, 2 Peter 3:9*)

This Church seeks to benefit the people of Valley Brook by providing opportunities for spiritual, physical, intellectual, social and cultural development. (*Luke 2:52*)

ARTICLE III

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; Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 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.
(Matthew 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 Timothy 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. *(Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 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; Romans 8:14-17; Ephesians 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; Ephesians 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. *(Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:38-41; Ephesians 2:19-22; Ephesians 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 Corinthians 9:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 2:14-16; Colossians 3:17-23; I Thessolonians 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. *(Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-32)*
10. 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. *(Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Corinthains1:10)*
11. 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 joy of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked. *(John 5:28, 29; Revelation 20:1-15; II Corinthians 5:10, Matthew 25:31-46)*

ARTICLE IV

Affiliation

This Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches, this Church voluntarily affiliates with the Baptist General Conference in its national and local expressions.

ARTICLE V

Membership

SECTION I: General

Membership in this Church shall consist of all persons who have met the qualifications for membership and are listed on the membership role.

SECTION II: Qualifications for Membership

1. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.
2. Baptism by immersion as a testimony of salvation.
3. Completion of the Church's membership class.
4. A commitment to abide by the membership covenant.

SECTION III: Responsibilities of Membership

It is the responsibility of each member to find and to fulfill his/her purpose in the church. The Church will assist each member to do that through the Church's membership classes: 101, 201, 301, and 401. The responsibilities of membership are described in the membership covenants for each class. The covenants are as follows:

THE VALLEY BROOK MEMBERSHIP COVENANT (101)

"Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with Valley Brook's statements, strategy and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Valley Brook church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

I. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By acting in love toward other members
- ...By refusing to gossip
- ...By following the leaders

"So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together." Rom. 15:19 (Ph)

"Live in complete harmony with each other — each with the attitude of Christ toward each other." Rom 15:5 (LB)

"Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts." 1 Peter 1:22 (GN)

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." Eph. 4:29

"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 no advantage to you." Heb. 13:17

II. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By praying for its growth
- ...By inviting the unchurched to attend
- ...By warmly welcoming those who visit

"To the church...we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly." 1 Thess. 1:2

"Go out into the country...and urge anyone you find to come in, so that My House will be full." Luke 14:23 (LB)

"So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified." Rom. 15:7 (LB)

III. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By discovering my gifts and talents**
- ...By being equipped to serve by my pastors**
- ...By developing a servant's heart**

"Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you..." 1 Peter 4:10 (Ph)

"God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up..." Eph. 4:11-12

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant..." Phil 2:3-4, 7

IV. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By attending faithfully**
- ...By living a godly life**
- ...By giving regularly**

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another." Heb. 10:25

"But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ." Phil. 1:27 (Ph)

"Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering." 1 Cor. 16:2

"A tenth of all you produce is the Lord's, and it is holy." Lev. 27:30

THE VALLEY BROOK MATURITY COVENANT (201)

Having committed myself to membership, I now commit to the habits essential for spiritual maturity, which are...

- A Daily Time With God (*Mark 1:35*) (Personal Bible reading and prayer)
- A Weekly Tithe To God (*1 Corinthians 16:2*) (Giving the first 10% of my income)
- A Committed Team For God (*Hebrews 10:25*) (Fellowship with Believers in a small group)

Take the time and trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit! (*1 Timothy 4:7*)

THE VALLEY BROOK MINISTRY COVENANT (301)

Having committed myself to membership and the habits essential for spiritual maturity, and agreeing with Valley Brook's Ministry Statement, I commit to serve in ministry and...

- * Discover my unique *shape* for ministry and serve in the area that best expresses what God made me to be.
- * Participate in classes to prepare me for ministry.
- * Demonstrate a servant's heart by serving in secondary ministries as the Body needs me.
- * Cooperate with other ministries and place the greater good of the whole Body over the needs of my ministry.

THE VALLEY BROOK MISSION COVENANT (401)

Having committed myself to membership and the habits essential for spiritual maturity, and having agreed with Valley Brook's Ministry Statement, and having committed to serve in ministry, now...

"I commit the rest of my life to being a messenger of God's good news to other people and using my time, my talent and my treasure for His kingdom regardless of where it leads or what it costs."

SECTION IV: Voting Privileges of Membership

Every Active/Resident Member shall have the privilege to vote on the following matters: the annual budget of the Church; the disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Church; the merger or dissolution of the Church; the acquisition of real property and related indebtedness; amendments to the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws of the Church and the calling of a Senior Pastor. Each member 18 years and older is entitled to one vote. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

SECTION V: Termination of Membership

Members shall be removed from the Church roll for the following reasons:

1. Death
2. Transfer of membership to another church.
3. By personal request of the member.
4. Dismissal by the Elders if the member's life and conduct is not in accordance with the membership covenant.

Procedures for the dismissal of a member shall be in accordance to Matthew 18:15-17.

SECTION VI: Restoration of Members

Members dismissed by the Elders shall be restored by the Elders according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8, when their life-styles are judged to be in accordance with the membership covenant.

Article VI

Membership Meetings

SECTION I: Annual Meetings

- a. An annual meeting of the members shall be held in May of each year, at such time as determined by the Elders. The purpose of this meeting shall be to adopt an annual budget, and elect Elders of the Church. Subject to Section IV of this Article, any other proper business may be conducted at this meeting.
- b. The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall govern all Congregational Meetings of the Church 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.
- c. One of the lay members of the Board of Elders shall serve as the moderator of the church at congregational meetings.

SECTION II: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called at any time by the Elders or the Pastor, for any purpose by giving notice to the members in accordance with Section V of this Article.

SECTION III: Quorum

Twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the Church's membership, shall constitute a quorum for the transation of business.

SECTION IV: Voting Procedure

Approval of business transactions involving real estate, constitutional amendment, budget, calling a Senior Pastor and elections of Elders shall require a three-fourths affirmative vote of the ballots received provided a quorum is present.

All other issues shall be decided by a simple majority.

SECTION V: Notice Requirements For Membership Meetings

General Requirements. Whenever members are required or permitted to take any action at a meeting, notice shall be given to members no less than two (2) weeks prior to a meeting. Notification of membership meetings shall be given in any of the following manners which shall be deemed to be a reasonable method of calling a membership meeting:

- a. Distribution of written material to the congregation in attendance at a regular weekend service;
- b. Announcement of the meeting in the Church newsletter;
- c. Oral announcement to the congregation at a service; or
- d. Delivery by United States mail to each member identified on the membership roll.

ARTICLE VII

Senior Pastor, Elders, Leadership and Employees

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 Elders and shall be responsible for working with the Elders, for leading the pastoral, ministry staff and the Leadership Team Directors. He shall be a member of the Elder Board.

Candidates for the Senior Pastor of the Church shall be nominated by the Elders. The members shall vote on the selected candidate at an announced meeting. The Senior Pastor's relationship with the church may be terminated by a written notice of such intention three months in advance by either the Board of Elders or the Senior Pastor.

Elders

SECTION I: Qualifications

Elders must be men who meet the qualifications set forth in 1Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, and must be a member in good standing of the Church.

SECTION II: Number, Term and Election

The authorized number of Elders shall be not be less than three (3), nor more than twelve (12). Each Elder shall serve for a term of three years and may serve successive terms. When filling a vacancy, an Elder shall serve for the balance of the unexpired term.

Nominees to fill vacancies on the Board of Elders shall be selected by the Elders. The members shall vote on the selected candidate(s) at the annual meeting.

SECTION III: Authority:

The Elders shall have the authority to:

- a. Select and remove leaders and employees of the Church; prescribe any powers and duties for them that are consistent with law, with the constitution; and
- b. Establish the need and purpose for additional Elders; and
- c. Borrow money and incur indebtedness on behalf of the Church and cause to be executed and delivered for the Church's purposes and in the Church's name, promissory notes and other evidences of debt and securities; and
- d. Provide leadership of the ministries of the Church. Oversee relationships with other Churches and organizations outside the Church. Develop leadership within the Church. Work with the Pastor to select and equip individuals for leadership of ministries in the Church. Plan the long term spiritual and strategic vision for the Church.

SECTION IV: Officers:

The officers of the Church shall be elected from within the Board of Elders. The officers shall be president, secretary and treasurer. The president of the Church and shall act as the moderator of the Church. The Senior Pastor may not serve as the president of the Church.

Leadership

Leadership Team Directors - The ministries and activities of the Church shall be organized into ministry teams determined by the Elder Board. Each ministry team will be under the oversight of a Leadership Team Director. Leadership Team Directors will be selected by the Elders and must be members in good standing of the church. Leadership Team Directors report directly to the Senior Pastor and the Elder Board.

Employees (Pastoral Staff, Ministry Staff and Support Staff)

Employees shall be approved and hired by the Elders. Employees shall serve under the leadership of the Senior Pastor. Termination of any employee shall be decided by the Elders.

ARTICLE VIII

Records and Reports

The Church shall maintain the following records and reports:

1. Adequate and correct books and records of accounts (financial records); and
 2. Written minutes of the proceedings of its members and Elders; and
 3. A record of the members of the Church, setting forth the members' names and addresses; and
 4. Contribution statements for contributors.
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ARTICLE IX

Dissolution

Should it become impossible for the work of the Church to continue, all property of the Church shall be transferred to the Baptist General Conference or the Northeast Baptist Conference or other Christian ministry, as the Elder Board shall determine.

ARTICLE X

Amendments to the Bylaws

Any Bylaws or any provision of them may be altered, amended or repealed, and new Bylaws may be adopted by a vote of three-fourths of the members present at any special or regular membership meeting at which a quorum is present.