

The Constitution of

LOST RIVER

BETHANY CHURCH

Revised February 13, 2022

THE CONSTITUTION OF LOST RIVER BETHANY CHURCH

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this church shall be Lost River Bethany Church.

ARTICLE II

Core Vision (Where we want to go)

To become a community with hearts and lives completely abandoned to God, which is growing in holiness, is Jesus led, is Holy Spirit filled, is Word of God rooted, and is discipleship focused. (John 15:5; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19-20; Galatians 2:20)

Core Mission (What we are to do)

To live out love and to walk in obedience to Jesus Christ, actively taking our place in God's ongoing work to save the lost and mature the saved. (1 Corinthians 13:2; 2 John 1:6; Ephesians 2:10; Matthew 7:21; John 3:16-17)

Core Method (How we are going to do it)

To endeavor to glorify God through:

Worship – Love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)

Ministry – Love one another as Christ loved us and gave His life for us (John 13:34)

Sharing – Tell others about Jesus and what He's doing for us (Mark 16:15-18)

Discipleship – Teach people to be disciples of Jesus (Matt. 28:19-20)

Core Purpose (Why we do it)

To glorify God as we grow in our relationship with Him and fulfill His will for our lives; taking part in His work of love, mercy, grace, and truth, to fill heaven with those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:31; Revelation 4:11; James 4:6-10; 1 Timothy 2:3-6)

Core Values (The most important things)

Prayer – Living in prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Ephesians 6:18)

The Word of God – In the Word to live the Word (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Love, Mercy, and Grace – Walking with love, mercy, and grace (Micah 6:8; John 13:34; 1 Peter 4:8)

Truth – Open to truth and truthfully open (Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9-10)

Humility & Repentance – Being real to heal (2 Chronicles 7:14; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9)

Serving & Giving – Serving to give what God has given (Matthew 20:28; 1 Peter 4:10)

ARTICLE III

A. Statement of Faith

1. We believe the original writings of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:12-21)

2. We believe in one true living God, who is perfect, infinite, and eternal; and who in Trinity exists as one essence in three co-equal persons; namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Together possessing the same eternal perfections, working inseparably and harmoniously in creating, sustaining, and redeeming the world. (Matthew 28:19; Genesis 1; John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:1-3; Deuteronomy 6:4; Ephesians 4:4-6; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; John 14:9-10, 26; Matthew 28:18-19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Revelation 4:11)

3. We believe Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and the image of the invisible God, who was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, demonstrated the authority and power of God in works and speech, suffered and died on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sin of the world and rose from the dead in a glorified body on the third day. We believe He ascended into heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God interceding for us, having accomplished all that is necessary for our justification and salvation through faith. We further believe that, by the Holy Spirit in the believer's life, Jesus is now leading His people and will come again, personally and visibly, to set up His kingdom and judge the World. (Luke 1:26-35; Hebrews 12:1-2; Colossians 1:15; Philippians 2:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25; 1 Peter 2:24-25; Luke 24; Hebrews 4:14-16; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 11:15-17; 20:4-6, 11-15)

4. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity whose ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, to convict of sin, to quicken the spirit of the unbeliever, to indwell & renew the spirit of the believer, and to sanctify & empower them to become more and more like Jesus in every way. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ. We further believe that the Holy Spirit also sanctifies, instructs, empowers believers for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption as He pours out His fruit into their lives. (Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:13-25; 2 Cor. 3:18; John 14:16-17; 15:26; Acts 2:16-21; 1 Corinthians 12:13; John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:22-23)

5. We believe all people are born into sin and that it is essential to, by faith, receive the finished work of Christ, confessing Him as Lord with their mouth and believing in their heart that God raised Him from the dead and so be justified freely by His grace. (Romans 3:23; 3:21-26; 3:24; 10:9-13; Ephesians 2:4-9; Acts 13:38-39)

6. We believe that the true Church is composed of all born-again believers in Christ. We believe its calling and mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ while living together in local communities, with a united focus towards holiness and a growing in Jesus Christ. We further believe that the function of Church leadership is to support, encourage and equip the saints for their work of ministry as they are led by the Holy Spirit in following Jesus' personal call on their lives. (John 3:3-7; Acts 2:42-47; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 4:1-2; 4:11-13,16; Philippians 1:9-11; 2:12-17; Hebrews 10:36, 13:15-17; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; 4:6-9; Matthew 25:32-46)

7. We believe in the imminent pre-millennial return of Jesus. Those who have believed in Him will be resurrected to an incorruptible body and be forever present with the Lord. Those who do not believe will join Satan and his host in everlasting punishment. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 15:50-55; Philippians 3:21; Luke 21:22-33; Matthew 25:32-32)

B. Statement of Principles

1. We believe the Bible is the complete revelation of God's will for humankind and is sufficient for all matters pertaining to life and godliness with salvation and maturity into Christ likeness being its chief end. We believe its purpose is to be used as a rule of faith and daily guide for the believer in all things pertaining to faith and practice. We further believe that the Holy Scriptures are the supreme standard by which all human conduct, practice, belief, and opinions shall be tried. (2 Peter 1:3-4; 1 Timothy 1:8-11; 2 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 1:10-12; John 5:38-39)

2. We believe all born-again believers have been commissioned to share the complete Gospel with the whole world through discipleship and sharing love, mercy, grace, and truth in word and deed with those God has placed in their lives. (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 7:24; Mark 16:15; Philemon 1:6)

3. We believe baptism is to be administered upon a personal declaration of faith in Jesus Christ but is not necessary for salvation. (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38)

4. We believe in the observance of the Lord's Supper in which the bread is a symbol of the Lord's broken body and the cup a symbol of His shed blood. We further believe in the fellowship of all believers at the Lord's Supper. (Luke 22:9-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

5. We believe in the sacredness of marriage and the sanctity of the home. We believe God ordained marriage and the family as the foundational institution of human society, and that the only legitimate marriage is a permanent covenant relationship between one man and one woman. (**Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 7:2**)

We further believe God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity is to be engaged in outside of the marriage of a man and a woman. (**Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Hebrews 13:4**)

We also believe that God hates divorce and intends a marriage to last until the death of one spouse. We believe divorce has no biblical grounds except in cases of sexual infidelity or abandonment. (**Matthew 19:8-9; 1 Corinthians 7:15**) We believe remarriage is permissible, when the divorce happened on biblical grounds, when there is genuine repentance, and when every effort to reconcile has been exhausted. We further believe that divorced and divorced & remarried persons may become members of the church and hold positions of service in the church. (**1 Corinthians 6:11**)

6. We believe that a Christian should exemplify a Christ-like lifestyle in all they do and say. (**1 Corinthians 11:1; Galatians 5:13-26; Ephesians 5:18**)

ARTICLE IV

Church Membership

A. Qualification

Membership of Lost River Bethany Church is open to mature persons who can with good conscience agree with and hold to its Statement of Faith and Statement of Principles, and endeavor to live out their pledge found in the "Member's Statement of Intent and Purpose" in the application. (Member's Statement of Intent and Purpose is found in Appendix A)

B. Admission

Persons may be admitted in two ways:

1. Baptism – Persons seeking membership by baptism will give a verbal confession of their faith before the church membership prior to baptism. We encourage those who are baptized to also become church members.

Note: Baptism without becoming a member can be arranged with the pastor or head elder. A verbal confession of faith before the church is still required.

2. Transfer – Persons baptized on confession of faith elsewhere, regardless of the mode of baptism, may be received into the church by verbal confession of faith before the church membership. If persons are members of another church, a letter of release from their former church is desirable.

C. Procedure

1. A prospective member shall apply for membership by completing a membership application. (Available from the Pastor or on the church website)
2. The Church Council is responsible for a review of the application, interviewing the candidate, and announcing it at a regular Sunday Morning Worship Service, not less than two weeks before testimony is to be shared.
3. Upon confession of their faith by public testimony, the prospective member is received into the church through the extending of the right hand of fellowship by the Pastor and available members of the Council.

D. Duration of Membership

Membership will cease upon any one of the following:

1. Resignation
2. Transfer
3. Inactive for one year as per the Member's Statement of Intent and Purpose
Note: Previous members can be restored to membership by reaffirmation of the Member's Statement of Intent and Purpose.
4. The death of the member
5. Removal via church discipline as per Article IV "G"

E. Privileges of Members

Members are entitled to:

- participate in all church business discussions and transactions
- vote
- hold office
- bring their suggestions or grievances to the Church Council by a request to the Council chairman

F. Transfer of Membership

Upon written or verbal request to the church leadership, letters of recommendation and release shall be granted to members in good standing.

G. Church Discipline

Church Discipline will be exercised according to **Matthew 18:10-19** when deemed necessary by the Elders. Restoration will always be the chief aim with love, mercy, grace, and truth being the key tools used for this process. An erring, unrepentant, church member may be released by a unanimous Church Council decision only after all other redemptive efforts have failed. Even though member relations with the church are severed, the relationship of the congregation to that person shall continue to be one of redemptive love.

ARTICLE V

Organization

Lost River Bethany Church functions under the headship of Jesus Christ and the direction of the Council in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this constitution. While congregational in nature, this church is not a pure democracy. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The pastor (head elder) together with the appointed elders and secretary are the leaders of the church (**Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2**). They are responsible to exercise oversight of all aspects of the church, and they speak as one voice. (See Organizational Chart in Appendix B of this document)

A. THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council is the governing body of the church and shall consist of five directors. They must be church members in good standing, having the qualifications as given in **1 Timothy 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 2:1-4; Titus 1:5-9**, and will be appointed in the following manner:

- 1) The Pastor (Head Elder) – 1 director
- 2) The Elders – 3 directors
- 3) The Secretary - 1 director

This five-member council is the official directorship for all Federal, Provincial, and Municipal affairs and must have more than 50% of its members at arm's length.

The Church Council is part of the people of God in community with its members having differing gifts, wisdom, and functions. Their meeting is not just a gathering of individual people with business to transact, but is the functioning body of Christ, formed by scripture, prayer, silent waiting, witnessing, and serving. The Church Council shall lead and encourage the congregation in matters of doctrine, faith, and practice, guided by the Bible and the constitution, and held accountable by the congregation. Besides the spiritual aspect of the church, the Council is responsible for calling business meetings, preparing agendas for them, and preparing the annual budget for presentation and approval at the annual meeting. It shall also assign responsibility for any function of the church not specified in this constitution.

The Council shall, at its first meeting of the year, elect a chairman and a vice-chairman from its members, appoint a treasurer, and appoint one elder to each Lead Ministry Team as a representative of that team to Council.

B. PASTOR

The pastor shall have the qualifications as given in **1 Timothy 3:1-7**, **2 Timothy 2:1-4**, and **Titus 1:5-9**.

The pastor shall teach and preach the Word of God, make a conscious effort to build relationships with church members and community folks, perform the Christian ordinances of the Church, and give spiritual leadership to the entire congregation.

The pastor serves as the head elder on the Church Council but is not to be the chairman.

The pastor shall be called or appointed by a vote of two-thirds of the membership quorum. The pastor and his wife shall automatically become members of the church upon accepting the call.

His office may be subjected to a vote of the membership with two weeks' written notice, given by the Church Council, before any congregational meeting. Should it become advisable to terminate the relationship between the pastor and the congregation, either shall be requested to give three months' notice.

The terms of salary shall have been determined and written in the contract with the call, subject to negotiation at the end of each fiscal year. Annual vacation and other absences of the pastor for attendance at conventions, special meetings, or camps shall be discussed at the time of the call. It shall be reviewed annually by the Church Council and presented to the pastor by the chairman.

C. ELDERS

The Elders will be called and recommended from the church membership as necessary by the existing Church Council. They shall have the qualifications as given in **1 Timothy 3:1-7**, **2 Timothy 2:1-4**, and **Titus 1:5-9**. They shall then be appointed at the annual membership meeting with a review and re-appointment every four years. They will hold their position until such time as they resign, are not re-appointed, or must be removed through church discipline for violation of the Scriptures or the church constitution.

The elders shall assist the pastor and be available to give the pastor encouragement and counsel. In the event of the pastor's absence or a vacant pastoral position they will take over arranging all pastoral duties.

One elder will be assigned to each Lead Ministry Team where they will serve as the liaison between that team and the Council.

D. SECRETARY

The secretary shall be called and recommended by the elders and appointed by the membership at the annual congregational meeting for a term of three years. The secretary shall attend all business meetings of the congregation and Church Council, keep and file a written record of those meetings, and make note of any changes to be reported to the government bodies by the Treasurer. The secretary shall forward a copy of the Council meeting minutes to the treasurer immediately following the meeting. The secretary will also prepare the year-end report booklet for the AGM.

E. TREASURER

The treasurer shall be appointed by the Church Council and shall receive, record, and deposit all money received; and shall disburse it as authorized by the Council. The treasurer shall present a monthly financial report to the Council and a professionally reviewed, written report of all receipts and disbursements at the annual congregational meeting, along with a budget comparison of the year ended and next year's budget. The treasurer may be invited to the budget-setting Council meeting(s). As well, the Treasurer will prepare and remit all municipal, provincial, and federal government requirements.

F. THE FOUR LEAD MINISTRY TEAMS – **Missions & Outreach Team, Education Team, Maintenance Team, and Service & Hospitality Team**

1. Qualifications

Lead Ministry Team members shall have the qualifications as given in **1 Timothy 3:8-13**. All members should exhibit a growing maturity towards these qualifications.

2. Organization

The Lead Ministry Team Director must be a church member in good standing and will be recommended by the Church Council for appointment by the church members at the annual membership meeting with a review and re-appointment every two years. The director will lead their respective Team and be responsible to recruit other team members to help set their annual goals and carry them out. Each Lead Ministry Team shall have a minimum of three members consisting of the Director, the Council representative (an elder), and one or more other volunteers (not necessarily church members) recruited by the director.

All other church ministries and areas of service will be responsible to one of the Lead Ministry Teams as assigned (See Organizational Chart in Appendix B). There will be one elder assigned to each Lead Ministry Team as a representative to the Church Council.

The four Lead Ministry Teams shall be the arms of the church and shall be responsible to the Church Council. Each Lead Ministry Team is required to conduct its own regular meetings (at least quarterly) for the purpose of planning its area of work, within the restraints of the constitutional guidelines, within their annual budget, and in alignment with the vision program. They shall submit minutes of their meetings to the Secretary in digital format right after they meet.

All major decisions of any Lead Ministry Team outside of the constitution and fiscal restraints of their budget must be approved by the church membership at a congregational meeting. The Council may approve minor spending decisions (less than 10% over budget) without congregational approval.

G. FUNCTIONS OF THE LEAD MINISTRY TEAMS

1. Missions & Outreach Ministry Team

The Missions & Outreach Ministry Team shall oversee both local and foreign missions. It should take charge of local evangelism and outreach, as well as foreign missions.

2. Education Ministry Team

The Education Lead Ministry Team shall oversee all the education related programs of the church. This includes all the kids, youth, and adult Sunday School ministries. Overseeing the Church youth group, VBS programs, and library fall under the responsibilities of the Education Ministry Team.

3. Maintenance Ministry Team

The Maintenance Ministry Team shall take charge of the maintenance and operation of the real properties and equipment of the church. It shall also be responsible for the supervision of the cemetery committee and other similar subcommittees.

4. Service & Hospitality Team (led by the Pastor)

The Service & Hospitality Team will be responsible for overseeing the ministries, serving positions, and programs that are directly connected to the Sunday morning service, church hospitality, and other special services that take place at the Church. Because this committee is responsible for Sunday morning services and others similar services and events it will in normal circumstances be led by the Pastor.

H. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

A congregational business meeting shall take place annually before the end of February. The church fiscal year shall be the same as the calendar year. Although anyone is welcome at the congregational meetings, only church members have a vote.

All reports and the agenda for the annual meeting shall be available in writing to the members two weeks in advance. All Lead Ministry Teams and subcommittees, as well as positions of service in the church, are responsible to hand in a year-end report. All Lead Ministry Teams are to hand in their department's year-end report to the Church Council for the annual general meeting. Subcommittees and other positions of service are to submit their year-end report to the Ministry Team Director they are responsible to. The Team Director will include all reports in their Lead Ministry Team report.

The Church Council shall call special congregational meetings as needs arise.

All business meetings shall be announced at least two Sundays prior to the date of the meeting. Decisions, approvals, and appointments, other than constitutional changes, will be made by a simple majority vote of the members present, providing there is a quorum. The quorum for all congregational meetings required for doing business or taking any action shall be 30% of the membership. Any constitutional changes require a two-thirds majority vote.

ARTICLE VI

Church Documents

A. Constitution

This constitution is to be considered a servant and not a master in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ through the church. Therefore, this constitution may be altered, amended, or repealed by the active members at any regular or special congregational meeting by a vote of two-thirds of a quorum, provided the announcement of such a proposed change is given in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

This document should be viewed as the guidelines as to “what & how” we carry out our mission and fulfill our purpose for Lost River Bethany Church. One should view this document in its organizational place of authority as listed below:

1. The Triune God
2. The Word of God
3. The Constitution
4. The Church Council (responsible to the membership)
5. The Policies (In the appendix)

B. Church Policies

The church policy document, attached to the constitution as Appendix C, will be a “live document” that outlines the regular procedures and guidelines as to how Lost River Bethany Church functions on a day-to-day basis. Though the policy document is an appendix to the constitution it is not understood to be constitutional policy and therefore can be adjusted and amended by the Church Council as they deem necessary to run and operate efficiently as an organization.

Policy and vision program amendments by the Council are aimed to be done by unanimous decision. But when agreement is not possible, policies can be amended by a simple majority vote.

The policy document is to be considered a servant and not a master in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ through the church. It is used to simply help set and keep clear paths to best practice and help accomplish our mission and fulfill our purpose as we aim towards our God-given vision for Lost River Bethany Church.