

THE CONSTITUTION OF LAUREL COMMUNITY CHURCH

April 18, 2004
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THE CONSTITUTION OF LAUREL COMMUNITY CHURCH

PREAMBLE - We, the members of Laurel Community Church, a Nonprofit Corporation organized under the laws of the state of Oregon, in order to serve our Lord Jesus Christ, promote His cause, and participate in Christian fellowship, do ordain and establish this Constitution.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be Laurel Community Church.

ARTICLE II - STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 1. The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the inspired Word of God and that they are to be received through the Holy Spirit as the true rule and guide for faith and practice. (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:19-21)

Section 2. The Godhead

We believe in the one true, holy, and living God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, distinct but inseparable. (Deuteronomy 6:4; John 10:30; II Corinthians 13:14)

Section 3. The Person and Work of Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man, in whom the divine and human natures are perfectly and inseparably united.

We believe that the Lord, Jesus Christ, died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that all who believe in Him are justified by faith in His shed blood and have eternal life. (Luke 1:35; John 3:16; Hebrews 7:25; I John 2:12, 13; I Peter 2:24)

Section 4. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit who reveals Jesus Christ through the Word of God, convicting and converting sinners and comforting and instructing saints. (John 16:7-11; Romans 8:9-16)

Section 5. The Sinfulness of Man

We believe that man is a moral and rational being created in the image of God and that the fall of man into sin brought all men under Divine condemnation from which only Christ can deliver us. (Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 3:23; Romans 8:1; Ephesians 2:1-15)

Section 6. The Sacraments

We believe that Christ ordained the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We believe that Baptism is a symbol of repentance and inner cleansing from sin. We believe that all who trust in Christ as their Saviour shall have the privilege of partaking of the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 3:16; Luke 22:17-20; Acts 2:39; Acts 8:36-39; I Corinthians 11:23-28)

Section 7. The Christian Life

We believe in the Spirit-filled life by which man may live a righteous life before God and grow in Christian maturity.

We believe that the grace of God that saves, teaches believers to deny ungodliness and to live righteously in this present world. (John 17:14-18; Ephesians 5:18b; I Thessalonians 5:23; I John 2:15-17)

Section 8. The Second Coming of Christ

We believe in the personal coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones and in His return to earth with His saints to establish His kingdom. (Acts 1:10, 11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19:11-16)

Section 9. The Future State

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they who are saved unto the resurrection of life and they who are lost unto the resurrection of damnation. (Luke 16:19-26; John 5:18, 19; I Thessalonians 4:16, 17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 10:11-15)

Section 10. The Church

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe that the Church is a fellowship of believers who observe His ordinances and who seek to serve and witness for Him. (John 17:21; I Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 1:22, 23, 5:25-27)

ARTICLE III - SACRAMENTS

Section 1. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly and shall be open to all those who trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Section 2. Baptism

The preferred mode of Baptism is immersion, but other modes are recognized and may be used if requested. Baptism shall not be a requirement for church membership but is viewed as an outward sign of inner cleansing from sin.

ARTICLE IV - RELIGIOUS EVENTS

The congregation and the people of the local community are encouraged to have significant events in their lives, including, but not limited to, child dedications, weddings, Baptisms, funerals, and memorial services, performed in the church.

ARTICLE V - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications

Because church membership is a sacred fellowship that involves high privileges and solemn obligations, applicants seeking membership in Laurel Community Church shall be counseled by a member of the Elder Board in regard to these privileges and obligations. They shall attend a membership class, be in agreement with the Statement of Faith of Laurel Community Church, be affirmed by the Elder Board, and answer affirmatively the following questions, in a worship service if physically possible.

- A. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour and do you now confess Him?
- B. Do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God and that therein is revealed the only way of salvation?
- C. Do you take this Word to be your rule of faith and conduct?
- D. Will you be loyal to Laurel Community Church, sustain it with your earnest prayers and regular attendance, contribute to its support as the Lord prospers you, and render Christian service according to your ability?

Section 2. Active Members

Active Membership shall be based on active interest, Christian testimony, and attendance. Active Members who are 18 years of age and older shall have full voting privileges on all matters.

Section 3. Inactive Membership

An Active Member who has been absent from Laurel Community Church for two years with no communication shall be recommended by the Administrative Committee to the Elder Board for Inactive Membership. An Inactive Member shall have no voting privileges. After three years as an Inactive Member, if the Inactive Member demonstrates no interest, the Administrative Committee shall recommend to the Elder Board removal from membership. During the three-year period, upon request to the Elder Board an Inactive Member shall be returned to active status.

Section 4. Membership Records

The Administrative Committee shall maintain an up-to-date list of Active and Inactive Members. Active and Inactive Membership shall be reported quarterly by the Administrative Committee to the Elder Board. Any recommended changes in membership status shall be presented to the Elder Board for its action. Any changes in membership shall be recorded in the church records and reported at the next Regular Congregational Meeting.

Section 5. Membership Removal

The Elder Board shall consider recommendations to remove the following persons from the membership rolls:

- A. A member for whom another church requests a letter of transfer.
- B. A member who presents a written request to withdraw from the membership.
- C. An Inactive Member who has had that status for five years without demonstrating renewed interest.
- D. A member who dies.

Based upon Matthew 18:15-19, after meaningful attempts to reconcile and redeem a member whose teaching or conduct has been determined to be anti-scriptural and harmful to the congregation, the person's membership may be withdrawn.

ARTICLE VI - GOVERNMENT

Section 1. Officers

A. Elders and Elder Board

1. Elders are spiritual leaders from the church's Active Membership. These men are responsible to the Lord to lead, educate, provide spiritual oversight to, and pray for the congregation. They shall be responsible for the general oversight of the church.
2. The Elder Board shall consist of the Lead Pastor, all paid Elders (pastoral staff), and those elected (non-paid) as Elders from the Active Membership.
3. Before appointment to office, these men shall meet the qualifications set forth in Scripture (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and I Peter 5:1-4).
4. The Elder Board shall consist of a minimum of three Elders elected at large by the Active Membership. At least two-thirds of the Elder Board shall consist of non-paid Elders. Additional Elders may be added as the Elder Board determines it necessary.
5. The Elder Board shall ensure that anyone who provides spiritual instruction is in agreement with the Statement of Faith (II John 7-11).
6. The Elder Board shall ensure that the Word of God is faithfully preached.
7. The Elder Board shall oversee the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism. The Elder Board shall be responsible for encouraging and nurturing the congregation, visiting the sick, and reaching out to the unchurched of the community.
8. The Elder Board shall be the legal representative of Laurel Community Church and shall be responsible for overseeing the business affairs of the church.
9. The Elder Board shall have no authority to buy, sell, lease, mortgage, or transfer any real property of the church, or incur debts without a vote of the Active Membership authorizing any such action.

10. At least annually, the Elder Board shall review the Constitution and Statements of Responsibilities of each of the Committees.
11. The Elder Board shall annually select from among themselves a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary.
 - a. The Chairman shall be responsible for the chairing of all Congregational Meetings, Elder Board Meetings, and Church Council Meetings. He shall execute, jointly with the Secretary and in the name of Laurel Community Church, all deeds, bonds, contracts, and other obligations and instruments authorized by the Elder Board and the Active Membership.
 - b. The Vice-Chairman shall be vested with all powers and shall perform all the duties of the Chairman in the event of the absence or disability of the Chairman.
 - c. The Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that minutes are kept for all Congregational Meetings, Elder Board Meetings, and Church Council Meetings. He shall be responsible for the keeping of the legal documents of Laurel Community Church. He shall be responsible for the serving of all notices as required in this Constitution. He shall execute, jointly with the Chairman and in the name of Laurel Community Church, all deeds, bonds, contracts, and other obligations and instruments authorized by the Elder Board and the Active Membership.
12. Elders shall be ex-officio members of all Committees.

B. Diaconate (Deacons/Deaconesses)

1. Members of the Diaconate are spiritual leaders and shall consist of those hired for the position and those elected (non-paid) from the Active Membership. They are responsible to the Lord, under the direction of the Elder Board, for the management of the ministries of the church.
2. Members of the Diaconate shall serve as leaders of the various Committees as listed herein. In the event that a member of the Elder Board is called to serve on a Committee, a Deacon or Deaconess may also be hired or nominated and elected to lead that Committee.

3. Members of the Diaconate shall meet the qualifications set forth in Scripture (Acts 6:3; I Timothy 3:8-13).

C. The Church Council

The Church Council shall consist of the Elder Board and the Diaconate. The Church Council shall be responsible for coordinating the ministries and activities of the church.

Section 2. Committees

The committee leaders (Deacons/Deaconesses) shall appoint individuals to serve on their committees. Committee members shall serve for the term of the leader but may be re-appointed. Committee membership and changes shall be reported to the Church Council. Each Committee shall have a Statement of Responsibilities that is approved by the Elder Board.

- A. The Benevolence Committee shall consist of the leader and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This committee shall be responsible for aiding members of the church and community in areas of physical and emotional needs.
- B. The Christian Education Committee shall consist of the leader and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This committee shall be responsible for the Sunday School and the Christian education of the congregation.
- C. The Evangelism/Discipleship Committee shall consist of the leader and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This committee shall be responsible for the local evangelism and discipleship activities of the church.
- D. The Fellowship Committee shall consist of the leader and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This committee shall be responsible for the fellowship activities of the church.
- E. The Finance Committee shall consist of the leader, the Church Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This committee shall be responsible for the administration of the finances of the church. They shall prepare an annual budget to be presented to the Elder Board for review and recommendation to the congregation. This committee shall also be responsible for a monthly audit of the Church Treasurer and Financial Secretary's records.
- F. The Missions Committee shall consist of the leader and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This

committee shall be responsible for missionary relations, implementing the missions program of the church, and coordinating the other mission activities within the church.

- G. The Properties Committee shall consist of the leader and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This committee shall be responsible for the care, upkeep, and use of the physical properties of the church.
- H. The Worship Committee shall consist of the leader and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This committee shall be responsible for the planning and coordinating of the worship services and music program of the church.
- I. The Youth Committee shall consist of the leader and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This committee shall be responsible for the church youth activities and programs of the youth of the church.
- J. The Women's Ministry Committee shall consist of the leader and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This committee shall be responsible for the church Women's Ministry activities and programs of the women of the church.
- K. The Men's Ministry Committee shall consist of the leader and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This committee shall be responsible for the church Men's Ministry activities and programs of the men of the church.
- L. The Administrative Committee shall consist of the leader and those members who shall be appointed to the committee. This committee shall be responsible for the administrative functions for all employees and contract staff, including hiring and termination of all paid positions except those for Elders and Deacons/Deaconesses. Actual hiring and termination of any employee shall be pre-approved by the Elder Board. This committee shall assure that for each employee or contract staff hired, a direct supervisor is specified. This committee shall also be responsible for maintaining the membership records.

Section 3. Other Church Positions

The term of each of the following positions shall be one year. The person occupying the position may be re-appointed.

- A. The Church Treasurer shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Active Membership annually. The Church Treasurer shall disburse the general and specific funds

of the church as provided by the annual budget, keep accurate account of all funds, and prepare monthly and annual reports to the congregation.

- B. The Financial Secretary shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Active Membership annually. The Financial Secretary shall receive and record all money given to the church, keep a record for each individual contributor, give a receipt to each contributor annually, and prepare monthly and annual reports to the congregation.
- C. The Historian shall be appointed by the Elder Board annually, and shall be responsible for preserving church material of historical significance and for informing the congregation of the history of the church.

Section 4. Selection, Terms, and Removal of Elected Positions

A. Selection

The Elder Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee, which shall consider qualified and willing candidates and shall submit at least one name for each non-paid vacancy on the Elder Board and Diaconate. The Nominating Committee shall also submit at least one name for the positions of Church Treasurer and Financial Secretary. The committee shall be composed of one elected Elder, one elected Deacon/Deaconess, and at least three Active Members at large. Nominations will not be taken from the floor at a Congregational Meeting.

Each candidate for non-paid Elder Board positions, non-paid Diaconate positions, Church Treasurer, and Financial Secretary nominated by the Nominating Committee, is subject to approval by the Elder Board, and shall stand for confirmation by a majority vote at the next Congregational Meeting.

B. Terms

Each elected Elder and elected Deacon/Deaconess shall serve a term of three years. Terms shall be staggered so that approximately one-third of the Elder Board and one-third of the Diaconate are elected each year. After serving two consecutive terms, it is recommended that elected Elders and elected members of the Diaconate take a one-year sabbatical before being re-elected to the same position. If an officer resigns or is removed, a successor shall be appointed by the Elder Board for the remainder of that term of office and confirmed by the Active Membership at the next Congregational Meeting.

Removal and Resignation

At any time, any person elected or approved by the Active Membership may be relieved from service through resignation or dismissal.

ARTICLE VII - PAID MEMBERS OF THE ELDER BOARD AND DIACONATE

Section 1. Qualifications

A. Paid Elders

Paid members of the Elder Board must be called of God to the ministry, assent to the Statement of Faith of Laurel Community Church, and shall meet the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and I Peter 5:1-4.

Each one shall become a member of Laurel Community Church within six months of beginning ministry at Laurel Community Church. Each one shall be licensed or obtain a license to the gospel ministry within three months of beginning ministry at Laurel Community Church. The Lead Pastor shall be ordained or seek ordination by a manner acceptable to the Elder Board within one year of beginning ministry at Laurel Community Church. Other Elders are encouraged to seek ordination but shall not be required to do so.

B. Paid Deacons/Deaconesses

Paid members of the Diaconate shall assent to the Statement of Faith of Laurel Community Church and shall meet the qualifications set forth in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13. Each one shall become a member of Laurel Community Church within six months of beginning ministry at Laurel Community Church.

Section 2. Selection, Terms, and Removal

A. Selection

The Elder Board shall appoint a Search Committee, which shall seek and interview candidates for Lead Pastor, paid Elder, and paid Deacon/Deaconess. The committee shall consist of at least one member of the Elder Board, at least one member of the Diaconate, and at least three Active Members of the congregation at large. The Search Committee shall recommend at least one candidate for each vacancy to the Elder Board for its approval and presentation

to the congregation. Notice shall be published two Sundays before the Elder Board presents a candidate to the congregation.

Voting for a candidate must be within two weeks following the Elder Board's presentation and shall be done by ballot of the Active Membership. Seventy-five percent of the Active Members who are voting must approve the candidate to validate his or her selection. Each candidate shall be voted on before a new candidate is presented.

B. Terms

Except as provided for herein, a paid Elder and paid Deacon/Deaconess shall first serve for a one-year term, after which, a confirmation vote shall be taken for an indefinite term. Upon being confirmed, a paid Elder shall become a voting member of the Elder Board.

C. Removal and Resignation

Paid Elders or paid members of the Diaconate shall serve until relieved by resignation or a request of the Active Membership. They shall give a minimum of 30 days notice before resigning from service. In the event the Active Membership votes to remove them, their salary shall continue for a minimum of 30 days.

A Special Congregational Meeting to consider dismissal of a paid Elder or paid Deacon/Deaconess may be called by the Elder Board, and must be called upon presentation to the Elder Board of a petition signed by 25 percent or more of the Active Members of the congregation. Dismissal shall require a majority vote by ballot of the Active Members voting at the Congregational Meeting.

Section 3. Compensation and Benefits

A. The compensation packages for each of the paid members of the Elder Board and Diaconate shall be determined by the non-paid members of the Elder Board in conference with the Administrative Committee.

B. Paid members of the Elder Board and Diaconate shall be entitled to at least one day each week as a day of rest.

C. Paid members of the Elder Board and Diaconate shall be given permission to minister elsewhere, if such ministry is not considered by the Elder Board to interfere with the activities of Laurel Community Church.

Section 4. Responsibilities of the Lead Pastor

- A. The Lead Pastor shall be devoted to the service of the church and shall faithfully give himself to pastoral work (Ephesians 4:11-16; II Timothy 4:2).
- B. The Lead Pastor shall be accountable to the Elder Board and fulfill duties as assigned.
- C. The Lead Pastor shall supervise the other paid Elders and the paid members of the Diaconate.

ARTICLE VIII - MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship and Prayer Meetings

Meetings shall be held for public worship each Sunday, with cancellation of any service authorized only by the Elder Board. Prayer meetings shall be held regularly.

Section 2. Board, Council, and Committee Meetings

The Elder Board shall meet at least monthly, and the Church Council shall meet at least quarterly. Committees shall meet as needed.

A quorum of two-thirds of the Elder Board shall be present at any Elder Board meeting to conduct business. In addition, a vote of at least two-thirds of the total number of the Elder Board shall be necessary to approve an item of business.

Section 3. Regular Congregational Meetings

Regular Congregational Meetings to perform church business shall be held quarterly during the months of January, April, July, and October. Election of officers, approval of the annual budget, and the hearing of committee reports shall occur at least annually.

Section 4. Special Congregational Meetings

Special Congregational Meetings may be called by a majority of the Elder Board, or upon the written request of 25 percent of the Active Members.

Section 5. Congregational Meeting Guidelines

- A. Notice of any Congregational Meeting and its agenda (including the names of any nominees or candidates) shall be posted in the church in a prominent place and given during the worship service on at least the two Sunday mornings immediately preceding the

meeting. (for example: notice on the morning of the first; notice on the morning of the eighth; meeting no earlier than the afternoon of the eighth.) In addition, notice of a Special Congregational Meeting and its agenda (including the names of any nominees or candidates) shall be given by mail to all Active Members in time to reach them at least one week before the meeting.

- B. Only items listed in the posted agenda may be acted upon at any Congregational Meeting. Business not listed in the agenda may be introduced and discussed at any Congregational Meeting, but no action may be taken until another Congregational Meeting.
- C. When questions of proper procedure arise, Roberts Rules of Order may provide guidance and direction.
- D. A quorum consisting of 25 percent of the Active Members shall be necessary to conduct business at any Congregational Meeting. Voting at all Congregational Meetings shall be limited to Active Members who are 18 years of age or older. Regular attending non-members may attend Congregational Meetings and may have the privilege of the floor, but shall not vote on the business of the church. A majority vote shall be required for the passage of any motion unless otherwise specified in this Constitution.
- E. Unless waived by unanimous consent of all eligible voters present, all voting shall be done by written, secret ballot. Except for voting on an amendment to the Statement of Faith, there shall be no absentee ballots. There shall be no voting by proxy.

ARTICLE IX - OTHER MATTERS

It is desired that all functions in the congregation shall be performed harmoniously and to the honor and glory of the Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 1. Fellowship

It is desired that Laurel Community Church have fellowship with other churches and local, national, and international associations of evangelical belief.

Section 2. Finances

The method of raising funds for the church shall be by voluntary tithes and offerings; exceptions must be authorized by the Elder Board.

Section 3. Use of Properties

The church facilities shall be available for activities consistent with the purposes and the regulations of the church.

ARTICLE X - DISSOLUTION

In case of the dissolution of this corporation, insofar as it is not inconsistent with the laws of this state and the country under which this corporation is established, all of its assets shall be first applied to the payment of all of its obligations and then distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Such distribution shall be made to organized Christian missions, the organization(s) to be specified by majority vote of the Active Members at the time such distribution is voted.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The required notice and agenda shall include the specific proposed constitutional changes. A two-thirds majority vote shall be required to amend any article except the Statement of Faith, which can only be amended by the approval of a 90% majority vote. If necessary, an absentee ballot will be made available for a statement of faith vote after a discussion with one of the elders.