

Preface

This Church Operations Manual consisting of the Church's Constitution and By-Laws and Church Handbook of Laurel Hill Baptist Church (LHBC) was adopted by its members in its Special Called Business Meeting July 7, 2004.

This is dedicated to God and is intended for use as a guide for the membership to use in advancing God's Will through LHBC.

This Operations Manual was derived through prayer, previous Constitution and By-Laws used by LHBC, a sub-committee of the Administrative Committee of LHBC, and through the review and approval of the membership of LHBC.

Laurel Hill Baptist Church
Charlottesville, Virginia
July 7, 2004

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Page 11, Section 5b
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Constitution and By-Laws

Laurel Hill Baptist Church
Charlottesville, Virginia

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A Brief History of Laurel Hill Baptist Church

Laurel Hill Baptist Church was organized in May 1887 by Rev. John T. Randolph and Rev. John Farrar. Rev. Randolph was Laurel Hill's first pastor.

A parcel of land east of US Route 29 on what is now Proffit Road (then called Buck Mountain Road) was donated by Captain R. Montgomery Hall. A section was set aside for a cemetery and the area Baptists, Methodists, Brethren, and Disciples joined together to build the church building which still stands and is now being used by another denomination. For several years the four denominations shared the church building, each holding services once each month.

In 1913 the Baptists bought the church building at auction for \$400.00. Two years later, on August 29, 1915, Laurel Hill joined with Chestnut Grove, Liberty, and Free Union Baptist churches to form the North Albemarle Field. Dr. M. L. Banister was the "Circuit Riding Preacher" for the four churches. On August 3, 1964, Laurel Hill withdrew from the field and Rev. Kenneth Clark became the full-time pastor of Laurel Hill.

As the church continued to grow, the need for a larger facility became apparent. On September 11, 1967, the church purchased 3.5 acres of land off State Route 649 (east of what is now Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport) from Mr. and Mrs. Samuel and Frances Baxendale for \$9,900.00. Construction on a new church building began in October, 1967 and was completed in October, 1970. Rev. Lynwood Coffman was the pastor at that time.

By 1981 Laurel Hill had again grown to the point that additional space was needed. Construction on the Educational Wing and Fellowship Hall began on August 15, 1982. Construction was completed in 1983 while Rev. Glenn Routt was pastor.

Renovation of the church offices, older Sunday School rooms, and sanctuary was completed in 1991. Rev. Tom Houston, 34th pastor of Laurel Hill Baptist Church, oversaw the work and continued as pastor until he was taken home to be with God in June 1997.

Currently Laurel Hill continues through its membership to pursue God's work in the greater Charlottesville area under the pastorship of Rev. Bruce Goldsmith.

Church Constitution

Preamble

We declare and establish this Constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern this body in an orderly manner. This Constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

Purpose For Being

Laurel Hill Baptist Church endeavors to fulfill its purpose for being based on God's Holy Word which states that He is Love and that we are to love Him. **(I John 4:7-8)** We are to show His love to others and share with the unsaved their need to repent of their sins and to invite Jesus Christ into their hearts to be their Savior - believing that He is the Son of God and that He died to save all mankind from their sins that they might have eternal life. **(Acts 2:42-47, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:8, Romans 3:10-12, Matthew 28:19-20, John 15:12)**

We are to be willing to minister unselfishly in the community - especially to the members of Laurel Hill Baptist Church. When we assemble ourselves together we are to be united under the leadership of the Holy Spirit - praising God and striving to glorify His name. As believers we are to build a fellowship in which we are at peace among ourselves - humbly, gently, and patiently uplifting one another in love.

We, the members of Laurel Hill Baptist Church, do hereby accept the challenge of said purpose and commit ourselves to carrying it out using the gifts with which God has so graciously endowed us as we strive daily to abide in Christ and to obey God's Holy Word. **(Matthew 22:37-39)**

I - Name

This body shall be known as Laurel Hill Baptist Church. The street address is 3595 Grand Forks Boulevard, Charlottesville, Virginia (P.O. Box 457, Earlysville, VA 22936).

II - Statement of Faith

The Holy Bible is the inspired, infallible, complete Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. This Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" originally adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963 and subsequently revised. 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. The ordinances of the Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

III - 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 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 throughout all the nations.

We will strive to maintain family and private devotions; to educate our children in true Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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 encourage Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, and always ready for reconciliation.

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

IV - Character

Section 1: Policy

a. This Church is an autonomous body, operating under the Lordship of Jesus Christ through democratic processes, with equal rights and responsibilities for all members. The Church recognizes and sustains the obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist and Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia churches.

b. The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this Church, who have been

baptized by immersion and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this Church.

c. The Scriptural officers of the Church shall be Elder and Deacon. The purpose of the Scriptural officers of the Church is to lovingly lead, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry. The leadership of the Church shall be vested in the Council of Elders who are responsible for leading the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church. The Council of Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The primary task of the Deacons shall be that of a “Servant:” caring for the members of the congregation; benevolence matters; assisting the Elders by performing services of advice; and assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel. The Elders and Deacons shall be allowed to make emergency decisions in the best interest of the Church.

Section 2: Doctrine

The 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 the belief of Southern Baptist churches as indicated in the Statement of Faith.

Section 3: Relationships

This Church is affiliated with and will, insofar as is practical, cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.

Church By-Laws

I. Membership

Section 1: General

This is a conservative Baptist body of believers under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this body.

Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the congregation of the Church is the final authority within this local Church. This authority is normally exercised through the Council of Elders and other officers to govern the Church. However, the vote of the membership of this Church at a properly called meeting, as provided in these By-Laws, shall be required to effect the following actions:

- a. Accept members into the Church, give letters of transfer or recommendation to members, or drop members from the Church roll;
- b. Elect officers of the Church;
- c. Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from office;
- d. Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by these By-Laws or an approved budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property;
- e. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Council of Elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting;
- f. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of this Church;
- g. Approve the call, job description and initial salary of Vocational Pastors.

Section 2: Qualifications

The membership of this Church shall be composed of persons who have given testimony of their salvation and the basis of their faith; who have experienced believer's baptism by immersion; is in agreement with the Constitution and By-Laws of this Church; and who have been accepted by vote of the Church.

Prospective new members will be required to participate in the Church's new member orientation program.

Section 3: Procedure

All persons desiring membership in this Church must present themselves at any regular worship service. They will then meet with the Council of Elders or Board of Deacons to give testimony as to their salvation as soon as possible. Upon completion of the Church's new member orientation and with the recommendation of the Elders or Deacons, they will be presented to the congregation for vote.

Ways one can present himself/herself for membership:

- a. By profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and submission to the ordinance of baptism by immersion at Laurel Hill Baptist Church.
- b. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church of like faith and practice.
- c. By statement of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and testimony of baptism by immersion after salvation by a church of like faith and practice.
- d. By restoration of membership. *See Sect. 8, Discipline.*

Section 4: Acceptance for Membership

With the recommendation of the Council of Elders or Board of Deacons, candidates for membership may be presented to the congregation at any regular worship service. Acceptance for membership will require affirmation by a two-thirds majority of those Church members present and voting.

Section 5: Privileges of Membership

Active members are voted into full fellowship of the Church. They will be entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church in conference. Active members will be eligible for consideration as candidate for service within the Church body so long as they qualify for the office as set forth in these By-Laws.

Section 6: Responsibilities of Membership

All Church members are expected to:

- a. Attend regularly the services of the Church.
- b. Willingly offer their spiritual gifts and talents for the service and edification of the entire body.
- c. Support willingly and voluntarily the financial obligations of the Church through tithes and offerings.

- d. Evidence, by attitude and behavior, the most cordial spirit of willing cooperation toward the execution of the whole program of the Church.
- e. Maintain such conduct, both privately and publicly, that will be worthy of their profession of faith in Christ. (*Philippians 1:27*)

Section 7: Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- a. By Letter. Letters shall be granted for any member to any church of like faith and order upon proper request from said church. A member in good standing may request this letter, provided such request names the church to which the letter may be addressed. On each letter granted, the extent of the member's activity in our body of believers may be provided.
- b. By Erasure. A member's name will be removed from the Church roll by erasure in the event of his/her joining another denomination or, through written request by a member that his/her name be removed from the Church roll. Should a member be removed from the Church roll by erasure they will be informed in writing of this action.
- c. Inactivity. Should a member absent themselves from the Church for a period of one year they will be considered an inactive member. Inactive members will have no voting rights nor be eligible for consideration as a candidate for service within the Church body. Inactive members may be restored to active member status by presenting themselves to the Church in the same manner as a new member. (*See Sect. 2, Qualifications*) This is not intended to apply to members who are physically or providentially hindered from faithful attendance.
- d. By death.
- e. By Church discipline. *See Sect. 8, Discipline.*

Section 8: Discipline

Church Discipline is needed to delineate clearly the Church from the world. We need to be able to show that there is a distinction between the Church and the world - - that it means something to be a Christian. If someone who claims to be a Christian refuses to live as a Christian should live, we need to follow what Paul said and, for the glory of God and for that person's own good, we need to exclude that member from membership in the Church.

Christ commanded his churches to exclude those who were immoral or who denied the doctrines of the Gospel. They could not in good conscience call themselves Christians while ignoring the clear command of Christ.

Discipline is not contrary to love but, when properly applied, an expression of love. Repentance rather than punishment is the goal. Should some serious spiritual condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the welfare of the Body of Christ, every

Biblical measure will be taken by the Elders and Deacons to resolve the problem. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian love, kindness, and forbearance. But after finding open, willful, and unrepentant sin negatively affecting the Body of Christ, the welfare of the Church will be best served by the exclusion of the member. The Church may take this action by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a Special Business Meeting called for this purpose, and the Church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the Church.

Upon evidence of that member's repentance, any person whose membership has been terminated through discipline may, upon the member's request, be restored to membership by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a Special Business Meeting called for this purpose.

See: 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, Romans 16:17-18, II Timothy 2:23-26, Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1

II - Church Officers

Section 1: General

The Scriptural Officers of the Church shall be Elders and Deacons. Scriptural Officers shall be called to office by vote of the membership of the Church as provided for in these By-Laws. The Council of Elders and Board of Deacons shall be composed of men of the Church. Other officers provided in the paragraphs below, along with the Elders and the Deacons, are the only bodies and positions created by these By-Laws. Written description of duties and responsibilities of Church officers are contained in the following paragraphs. All officers of the Church shall be members of the Church in good and regular standing.

Section 2: Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a body of believers under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Spirit. The Senior Pastor will spiritually lead the congregation, Church organizations, and the Church staff in the fulfillment of their responsibilities. The qualifications of the Senior Pastor shall be those outlined in **I Timothy 3:1-7**.

The Senior Pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. He shall be considered as a Pastor/Elder and will be a member of the Council of Elders. The Senior Pastor shall work with the Elders, Deacons, and Church staff to:

- a. Lead the Church in the attainment of its mission; (See Church Constitution: Purpose for Being)*

- b. Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to believers and unbelievers; and
- c. Promote spiritual growth of Church members and other persons in the community.

In the event of illness, extended absence, death or resignation of the Senior Pastor the Associate Pastor, Elders, and/or Deacons shall be responsible for the pulpit supply during the Senior Pastor's absence.

A Senior Pastor will be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. (See *Church By-Laws Reference Handbook, Calling a Pastor*)

Section 3: Church Staff

a. Ministerial Staff Officers - The Church shall call ministerial staff which may include an associate pastor, minister of education, minister of music, or youth pastor, when a vacancy occurs or upon recommendation from the Council of Elders. A job description shall be written when a need for additional ministerial staff has been determined. Ministerial staff shall be under the general direction of the Senior Pastor. See the policy, "Calling a Pastor" in the Church By-Laws Reference Handbook for additional information.

- b. Note: See Non-ministerial staff under Section 4: Council of Elders .

Section 4: Council of Elders

The Church shall have Elders to shepherd, oversee, lead and care for the Church according to New Testament concepts. The Elders will seek to provide spiritual leadership for the Church. They shall serve as a council of overseers and confer with the Senior Pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the Church. They are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the Church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls and the spiritual development of Christians. The number of Elders shall not be fixed but shall be determined by the Senior Pastor, incumbent Elders, and the Deacons as they are led by the Holy Spirit. (**I Peter 5:2, Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5**)

Responsibilities

An Elder's duties will consist of dealing with spiritual matters, conflicts, discipline and grievance matters which may arise in the Church. ***Elders are to be servant leaders, not rulers or dictators (I Peter 5:3).*** They are to sacrifice their time and energy for the good of others.

In counsel with the Senior Pastor, and by such methods as the Holy Spirit may direct, in accordance with the New Testament teaching, Elders are to have oversight of the discipline of the church. They are to be guided always by the principles set forth in **Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians 5: 9-13, and I Thessalonians 5:12-14.**

Each Elder shall freely confer with the Senior Pastor about all matters and cases of discipline, which in his judgment would be most wisely and spiritually handled in private with hopes of restoration.

The Elders will be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring non-ministerial staff employees as needed (e.g. office, clerical, manual workers). The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting. These Church employees shall be under the direction of the office designated by the job descriptions found in the Personnel Procedures of the Church By-Laws Reference Handbook.

Each Elder is required to oversee one of the five ministry teams, which consists of (1) *Worship*, (2) *Education*, (3) *Fellowship*, (4) *Missions*, and (5) *Business*.

Qualifications

An Elder shall be a man who professes Jesus Christ as Lord, Savior and Master. He shall be a man of spiritual maturity as recognized by the Council of Elders in the Church. His Christian character and qualifications shall be consistent with Biblical mandates as outlined in the *Church By-Laws Reference Handbook, Office of Elders*. (**Titus 1:6-9, I Timothy 3:2-7, I Peter 5:1-3**)

Appointment

Prospective Elders shall be recommended by the Senior Pastor and/or Council of Elders. These men shall be examined by the incumbent elders and shall examine themselves before God concerning their calling. Prospective Elders demonstrating themselves qualified for the position shall be presented to the church for examination. The church shall have a minimum of one (1) month to examine the qualifications of a prospective Elder. Any church member with an objection to a prospective Elder, based on a violation of the Biblical qualification of Elders, should submit written notice to the Senior Pastor or to the incumbent Elders. Any objection brought to the incumbent elders and confirmed by two (2) or more witnesses will be prayerfully considered. (**I Timothy 5:19-20**)

If no valid objections remain after the one (1) month period of examination, each prospective Elder will be affirmed by the Church and ordained at an appointed date.

Term of Elders

The term of active office for an Elder shall be for as long as he is qualified, capable, and desirous of fulfilling the duties of an Elder. An active Elder shall have the option of changing to inactive status upon his request. If later he is again desirous of fulfilling the duties of an active Elder, upon Elder body approval, the man shall immediately resume his position as an active Elder.

An Elder may be removed from that position should he fall under one or more of the conditions listed under Termination.

Termination

A person may be terminated from the office of Elder:

- a. By resignation.
- b. If he does not perform the duties of an Elder.
- c. If he becomes an offense to the Name and cause of Jesus Christ by his conduct.
- d. If he fails to meet and uphold the Biblical qualifications of Elders.
- e. If he fails to submit to the other Elders and other believers.
- f. In accordance with ***I Timothy 5:19-20***, he will be terminated if he fails to fulfill the requirements for continuing church membership at Laurel Hill Baptist Church.

The Council of Elders shall be responsible for disciplining and/or removal of any individual Elder who falls into any of the conditions *b-f* mentioned above.

Section 5: Board of Deacons

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament (***Acts 6:1-7***), Deacons are to be lifelong servants of the Church. The task of the Deacon is to serve with the Senior Pastor and Staff in performing pastoral ministries; to care for Church members and other persons in the community; and to be regular in their attendance in the services of the Church.

Responsibilities

As a “serving servant” of the Lord, His Church and the neighborhood, the Deacons will assist in the two church ordinances which are baptism and the Lord’s Supper, assist in caring for the benevolent needs of the Church, and work with new members in their orientation programs. The Chairman of the Deacons assigns new members to a Deacon who will minister to them and/or their families in their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. Deacons are to assist the Pastor where ever needed in regular services; participate in the Sunday morning service by reading of Scripture and/or offertory prayer; and securing the church building at the end of the services.

Qualifications

The Church shall elect only those members who meet the scriptural requirements of ***Acts 6:3-5*** and ***I Timothy 3:8-13*** to the office of Deacon. They are to be (1) men of honest report; (2) full of the Holy Spirit; (3) full of wisdom; (4) full of faith; (5) grave; (6) not double-tongued (7) not given to much wine; (8) not greedy of filthy lucre; (9) a holder of the faith; (10) tested and

proved; (11) blameless; (12) Christian family life; (13) husband of one wife; (14) ruling their children and their own houses well; and (15) bold in the faith. They shall be expected to be tithers and to attend all the regular services of the Church except when providentially hindered or for reasons approved by good conscience.

Appointment

Deacons shall be elected when needed as determined by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons. A Deacon's nomination shall come from the Board of Deacons with the Senior Pastor's and Elder's input. The Senior Pastor and at least one Deacon or Elder will counsel with those persons being considered as to their scriptural qualifications (***I Timothy 3:8-13***) and willingness to serve prior to being nominated. Qualified candidates willing to serve will be presented to the Church at a regular or duly called meeting for election to a position of service. A two-thirds vote of affirmation is necessary of members present and voting. Affirmation shall be by secret ballot. An ordination service will be conducted, if needed, as soon as possible following selection of a new Deacon by the Church.

Term of Deacons

Active Deacons shall serve on a rotational basis. After serving for three years, a Deacon shall have the option of changing to inactive status. An inactive Deacon will be eligible for resuming active status after the lapse of at least one year. Preferably, a man must be a member of Laurel Hill Baptist Church for at least one year to be eligible to serve as a Deacon. However, the Church leadership may waive the one (1) year membership requirement if need dictates, for one who has served faithfully in a church of like doctrinal beliefs, and has become a member of Laurel Hill. Before presenting him to the Church for a vote, the candidate must meet with the Elders and Deacons of Laurel Hill to discuss the doctrines of the Church and the duties of a deacon. There is no obligation to constitute as an active Deacon a person who comes to Laurel Hill Baptist Church from another church where he served in that capacity.

Termination

A Deacon may terminate his office by a written resignation to the Council of Elders or to the Senior Pastor. Immorality, insubordination (***I Timothy 3:10***), or teaching contrary to the "Statement of Faith," shall be grounds for immediate termination.

(More detailed duties and qualifications of the Deacons are contained in the Church By-Laws Reference Handbook.)

Section 6: Moderator

The Church shall elect as needed, upon recommendation from the Council of Elders, a moderator as its presiding officer of all Church business meetings. In the absence of the moderator the Chairman of Deacons shall preside. In the absence of both, the vice-chairman of Deacons shall preside. In the absence of all three individuals the church clerk shall call the meeting to order and the election of an acting moderator shall take place by majority vote. The moderator shall have no appointive duties or authoritative responsibilities except to moderate the Church business meetings in accordance with these By-Laws and *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Section 7: Parliamentarian

The Church shall elect as needed, upon recommendation from the Council of Elders, a parliamentarian. The person filling this position will be well versed in the procedures outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order* and will ensure that these procedures are followed in conducting Church business meetings. In the absence of the parliamentarian from a Church business meeting, an alternate will be elected to fill that role.

Section 8: Clerk

The Church shall elect as needed, upon recommendation from *the Council of Elders*, a Church clerk as its clerical officer. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the Church.

The clerk will be responsible for keeping a register of the names of Church members, with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms.

The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the Church and preserve or file all communications and written official reports.

Each January the clerk shall review the membership records and provide to the Deacons a list of all potentially inactive members. After the Deacons have verified the inactive status of said members the clerk shall issue letters notifying them of their change in membership status. (*See Membership, Section 7c*)

All Church records are Church property and should be filed in the Church office. The clerk shall maintain an archived copy of all Church business meeting records to be maintained.

Section 9: Treasurer

The Church shall elect as needed, upon recommendation from the Council of Elders, a treasurer as its financial officer. The treasurer shall be responsible to the Church for receiving,

holding, and disbursing the funds of the Church and for maintaining its financial records. The treasurer shall be bonded at the Church's expense, will report to the Business Team, and will provide all financial records for audit as directed by the Church or the Business Team. The treasurer shall provide to the Church, at least quarterly, an itemized financial report.

The Treasurer's term of office will be from January 1 to December 31. *The functions of the treasurer and financial secretary shall not be performed by one member.*

Section 10: Trustees

The Church shall elect three trustees to serve as legal officers for the Church. Upon recommendation by the Council of Elders, each trustee shall be elected for an indefinite term. A trustee may be removed from office by a vote of two-thirds of the active Church members present and voting at a business meeting. Their duty shall be to hold in trust the property of the Church. They shall execute all legal papers relating to the Church as directed, but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or take control of any property of the Church without a specific vote of the Church membership authorizing such action. They shall take no action nor make any decision which could affect Church operations except as may be directed by the Church.

Section 11: Financial Secretary

The Church shall elect as needed, upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders, a financial secretary. The financial secretary shall be responsible for keeping accurate records of all tithes, offerings, pledges, gifts, etc. to Laurel Hill Baptist Church. Individual records of each member's stewardship during a calendar year shall be provided to that member no later than the following January 31st. Monetary gifts by non-members will be recorded and distributed in the same fashion.

The financial secretary's term of office will be from January 1 to December 31. The Financial Secretary shall be bonded at the Church's expense. *The functions of the treasurer and financial secretary shall not be performed by one member.*

Section 12: Education Leader

The Education Elder and Team Leader are responsible for leading, guiding and planning the Sunday School ministry. They will seek and fill the Sunday School Director position and the Vacation Bible School Director position. They will also, in conjunction with the Council of Elders, be in charge of establishing other types of classes from time to time. The Sunday School Director is responsible for filling Sunday School teacher positions and overseeing the various curricula. It will be his responsibility to encourage the teachers to carry out their ministry in a faithful manner. The directors will come under the spiritual oversight of the Education Elder.

III - Ministry Teams

The work of the Church is accomplished through Team Ministries. There are five Teams: *Worship; Education; Fellowship; Missions; and Business*. An elder shall be assigned to each team as the Overseer and each team shall have a Team Leader assigned by the Council of Elders. All members of the Church are strongly encouraged to volunteer for at least one of the teams, depending on their spiritual gifts or talents. Positions within the Ministry Teams shall be filled by active members of Laurel Hill Baptist Church. Major functions, organization, and full descriptions of each team are presented in the Church By-Laws Reference Handbook.

Ministry Team leaders shall make reports to the Church on their programs, activities, and outreach actions at regular business meetings. The Church shall provide financial and physical resources for the advancement of these programs.

Ministry Teams are expected to keep the Senior Pastor informed of their operations, to accept his input when offered, and to allow him to attend their meetings in a non-voting capacity.

IV - Ordinances

Section 1: Baptism

Baptism is an act of obedience, symbolizing new life in Christ and testifying to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. New Testament baptism is always by immersion and only practiced after one's profession of faith in Christ.

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, should be baptized as soon as possible. Baptism is a prerequisite for Church membership.

- a.* Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- b.* Baptism shall be administered by the Senior Pastor or his designee with assistance of the Deacons.
- c.* Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
- d.* Those professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the Elders or Deacons. If they do not desire to be baptized, their names shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section 2: Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church partake of the bread and fruit of the vine. Its purpose is to commemorate our forgiveness and deliverance from sin through Jesus Christ, commemorate Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and anticipate His second coming.

- a. The Lord's Supper shall be observed every three months beginning the first Sunday of February unless otherwise scheduled by the Senior Pastor or Church.
- b. The Lord's Supper may be observed in either the morning or evening worship services.
- c. The Senior Pastor or his designee, with the assistance of the Deacons, shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- d. The *Worship Ministry Team* shall be responsible for the physical preparation of the Lord's Supper.

V - Church Meetings

Section 1: Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday Morning, Sunday Evening and Wednesday Evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and worship. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the Church as well as for all others desiring to attend and shall be conducted under the direction of the Senior Pastor. Worship services may be cancelled, when necessary, by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Elders and Deacons.

Section 2: Special Services

Revival services and any other Church meetings which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the Church shall be placed on the Church calendar by the Church secretary.

Section 3: Business Meetings

Regular - The Church shall hold a regular business meeting on the first Wednesday evening of February, May, September, and November. Under special conditions a meeting may be postponed.

Special - A specially called business meeting may be held to consider matters of significant nature. A one-week notice of the subject, date, time, and location must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme emergency renders such notice impractical.

Section 4: Quorum

The quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a scheduled meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 5: Parliamentary Rules

The Holy Bible is the authority for our spirit and personal behavior in all business meetings. This Constitution and By-Laws is the authority for our conduct of all business meetings. Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for the parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church. Should a conflict arise between Roberts Rules of Order, Revised and the Constitution and By-Laws of Laurel Hill Baptist Church, the Constitution and By-Laws of LHBC will prevail.

VI - Church Finances

Section 1: Budget

The Business Ministry Team, in consultation with the other Ministry Teams, shall prepare and submit to the Church for approval and adoption an annual budget, indicating by items the amount needed and necessary for all local and world-wide expenses and causes. The approved annual budget may be adjusted in part or as a whole at any time upon the recommendation of the Business Ministry Team and by Church adoption.

Section 2: Accounting Procedures

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the Church treasurer and assistant treasurer, or the financial secretary, and be properly recorded in the financial records of the Church. All persons who handle money shall be covered by a blanket indemnity bond at the expense of the Church.

A system of accounting, approved by the Church, that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Business Ministry Team.

Section 3: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall be from January 1 to December 31.

VII - Buildings and Equipment

Section 1: General

Laurel Hill Baptist Church desires not only to serve its members but also to offer use of its facilities to outside groups of like faith and doctrine; however the church must give approval prior to those facilities being used for other community activities.

Section 2: Policy Matters

Permission to use the building and facilities of Laurel Hill Baptist Church may be obtained by completion of a Facilities Use Request Form (available in the Church Office) and with the approval of the Council of Elders . Requests will be refused from outside groups whose activity or purpose is inconsistent with the faith and doctrine of Laurel Hill Baptist Church.

Additional use of the facilities of Laurel Hill Baptist Church necessarily increases the expenses of utilities and building maintenance. Therefore it is the responsibility of the Business Ministry Team to establish a facilities use fee to be charged to groups using Church facilities. This facilities use fee may be waived at the discretion of the Council of Elders.

See Church By-Laws Reference Handbook, Use of Church Space and Facilities.

VIII - Church By-Laws Reference Handbook

There shall be a Church By-Laws Reference Handbook containing Church policies; procedures; organizational charts depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the Church; Ministry Team descriptions and responsibilities; responsibilities of Church officers; staff and employee job descriptions; and other information required for reference purposes. This reference handbook shall be kept in the Church office and made available for use by any member of the Church. Any Church member or Church organization may initiate suggested changes to the reference handbook. The Council of Elders shall review the reference handbook as needed with authority to change, add, or delete information within the reference handbook with the exception of **Church policies**. Additions, revisions, or deletion of **Church policies** require:

- a. The recommendation of the Church officer or organization whose area of responsibility is involved.
- b. Approval by the Council of Elders.
- c. Approval by the Church body.

IX - Amendments

Changes to any part of this Constitution and By-Laws may be made at any regular or special business meeting of the Church provided a revision(s) or amendment(s) has been presented in writing to Church members at least 30 days in advance.

Amendments shall be by two-thirds vote of affirmation by all members of the Church present and entitled to vote.

X - Adoption

These statements comprising this Church's Constitution and By-Laws shall supersede any and all previous statements.