

# **THE BIBLE CHURCH dba BEAR CREEK BIBLE CHURCH BY-LAWS**

**September 27, 2015**

## **Article I – Name**

The name of this organization is "Bear Creek Bible Church" (BCBC).

## **Article II – Statement of Faith**

Bear Creek Bible Church believes:

1. In one God eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14).
2. In the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired of God, inerrant in the original writings, and of supreme and final authority in all matters of life and faith (II Tim. 3:16,17; II Pet. 1:20,21).
3. That God the Son became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, who was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and is God and man (Luke 1:35; John 1:1,2,14).
4. That man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sin nature, and became alienated from God. Therefore, man is totally depraved and unable to remedy his fallen condition (Gen. 1:26,27; Rom. 5:12,19; Eph. 2:1-3,12).
5. That Jesus died for our sins as a substitutionary sacrifice; and that all who believe in Him are justified by grace through faith, apart from works of any kind (Rom. 3:22-25,28; Eph. 1:7; 2:8,9; I Pet. 1:3-5; 2:24).
6. In the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His ascension into Heaven, and in His present life there for us, as High Priest, Intercessor and Advocate. (I Cor. 15:1-8; Acts 1:9-11; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 4:14; I John 2:1).
7. That all who have been justified are kept eternally secure by the power of God (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1,35-39; I Cor. 1:8,9; I Pet. 1:5).
8. That Satan, a fallen angel, is a person and author of sin and the instigator of the angelic and the subsequent human rebellion against God. He is the declared enemy of God and man and he will be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Gen. 3:14,15; Job 1:6,7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10).
9. That Christ ordained water baptism and the observance of the Lord's Supper until He returns (Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:20-34).
10. That it is the obligation of every believer to witness by life and by work and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all the world; and it is the responsibility of all believers to remember the work of the Lord in prayer and to support it with their means as the Lord has prospered them; and that every believer has a spiritual gift(s) which should be used to edify the Body of Christ (Acts 1:8; Rom. 12:1,2; 13:14; I Cor. 12:14; 16:2; II Cor. 8:11; 8:14; 9:7; Eph. 4:11-16).

11. That the prophecy of the rapture of the Church will be fulfilled (I Thes. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51, 52; John 14:1-3).
12. That Jesus Christ will return to establish an earthly kingdom for 1000 years (Isa. 11:1-12; Rev. 20:1-6).
13. That God's plan for human sexuality is to be expressed only within the context of marriage, that God created man and woman as unique biological persons made to complete each other. God instituted monogamous marriage between male and female as the foundation of the family and the basic structure of human society. For this reason, we believe that marriage is exclusively the union of one genetic male and one genetic female (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:5-6, Mark 10:6-9; Romans 1:26-27; I Cor 6-9).

### **Article III – Church Activities**

BCBC emphasizes the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through outreach ministries, service ministries, evangelistic efforts, and the support of missionary activities. BCBC will strive to prepare each believer to fulfill God's purpose and plan for his or her life. The church will administer the ordinances of Baptism and Communion, and will teach and preach the Word of God (the Holy Bible) through Sunday school classes, worship services, youth ministries, small-group Bible studies, and fellowship activities. The church will also conduct baby dedications, marriages, and funerals.

### **Article IV – Membership**

Persons who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior and who desire membership will attend membership orientation conducted by the Pastor or someone appointed by the Elder Board. Following the completion of the orientation, individuals desiring to join BCBC will meet with the Pastor or someone appointed by the Elder Board to publicly profess their faith in Jesus Christ and their belief in the Trinity, the full deity and humanity of Christ, the spiritual lostness of the human race, the substitutionary atonement and bodily resurrection of Christ, eternally secure salvation by faith alone, the physical return of Christ, and the authority and inerrancy of Scripture.

### **Article V – Organizational Responsibilities**

The ultimate authority of BCBC is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. For purposes of carrying out our Lord's will the church will follow the shepherding leadership of the Elders.

#### ***Section (A) – Elders***

**Qualifications:** Elders will be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith, Article II and be voting members conforming to all Scriptural requirements contained in I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; and I Pet. 5:1-5.

**Duties:** Elders will be responsible for the spiritual aspects of church administration. Specific duties of the Elder Board will include but not be limited to teaching doctrine, shepherding leadership, overseeing worship services, Biblical instruction, overseeing the

last two steps of the church discipline process, leading and overseeing the selection of staff and pastor nominees, long range planning, maintaining church membership, and appointing deacons. The Elders may use a Nominating Committee to vet potential Deacon appointees. The Elders will appoint a Nominating Committee(s) for the identification of Elders and will approve the final list of nominees.

If at any time, a conflict arises among church leadership that cannot be resolved by the Elders, the Elders will obtain binding arbitration from a group of professors (not less than three) from Dallas Theological Seminary. The professors will serve at their pleasure, an unspecified term, with vacancies being filled by the Elders.

**Number and Term of Office:** There will be a recommended minimum of three Elders not including the Senior Pastor. The Elders will be approved by the Congregation at a business meeting for a term of three years. An Elder elected for a period of three years may not serve more than six years consecutively; excluding time served fulfilling an unexpired term. In no case will a member hold office of both Elder and Deacon simultaneously. The Elders will elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Elder Board. The Senior Pastor is ineligible for either office. An Elder can be removed by a majority of the Elder Board and a two-thirds majority vote of the congregation.

### ***Section (B) – Deacons***

**Qualifications:** Deacons will be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith, Article II, and be voting members conforming to the Scriptural requirements contained in I Tim. 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6.

**Duties:** The Deacon Committee is specifically charged with responsibility for, and focused on 1) Maintenance of church facilities and physical properties; 2) Care of church members who need assistance and benevolence; 3) Assist the staff in searching for volunteers to fill ministry positions; 4) Service functions requested of them by the Elder Board.

**Number and Term of Office:** The Deacon Committee will consist of a recommended minimum of three Deacons. The Deacons will be appointed by the Elders for a three-year term. The Deacons will elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of their committee. Deacons may resign or be removed by a majority vote of the Deacon Committee and the Elder Board.

### ***Section (C) – Congregation***

The Congregation will consist of all members of the church and will be responsible for the following:

1. Election and dismissal of Elders.
2. Concurrence by majority vote in a Congregational Meeting with Elder decisions relating to: calling and dismissing pastors; placing members on the final step of church discipline; selling, purchasing, or leasing of real estate; developing new building programs; approving the annual budget; approving any indebtedness beyond a 30-day account; and creating staff positions.
3. Approval of additional general fund expenditures to the budget in excess of one and one half percent (1.5 percent) of the total annual church budget.

### ***Section (D) – Senior Pastor***

The Senior Pastor will be chosen by a two-thirds majority of the Congregation at a business meeting. He will remain in office until he tenders his resignation in writing to the church or is removed from office by recommendation of the Elder Board and a two-thirds majority vote of the Congregation. The Senior Pastor will be accountable to the Elder Board.

**Qualifications:** Same as Elders.

**Duties:** Duties of the Senior Pastor will include but not be limited to preaching, teaching, prayer, counseling, discipleship and shepherding. He will be a permanent member of the Elder Board.

### ***Section (E) – Other Pastor(s)***

Other Pastor(s) will be chosen by a two-thirds majority of the Congregation at a business meeting. They will remain in office until they tender their resignation in writing to the church or are removed from office by recommendation of the Elder Board and a two-thirds majority vote of the Congregation. The other pastor(s) will be accountable to the Senior Pastor or the Elder Board in the Senior Pastor's absence.

**Qualifications:** Other pastor(s) will be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith, Article II and be or become voting member(s). They will conform to all Scriptural requirements contained in Titus 1:7-9; I Pet. 5:1-5; I Tim 3:3,6,7; and the following criteria from I Tim 3:2 – "Now the overseer must be above reproach... temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach."

**Duties:** Duties of the pastor will be assigned by the Elder Board.

### ***Section (F) – Staff***

Full-time and part-time staff positions will be filled by the Elder Board or by the pastor over that particular ministry. Staff members will be accountable to the Senior Pastor or the Elder Board in the Senior Pastor's absence. They will remain on staff until they tender their resignation in writing to the Elder Board or are removed from office by a majority vote of the Elder Board.

**Qualifications:** Full-time and part-time staff will be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith, Article II.

**Duties:** Duties of the staff will be determined by the Elder Board.

### ***Section (G) – Appointed Officers***

The Elder Board will appoint a Treasurer for a one-year term. His duties will include submission of a monthly financial report to the Elder Board and the presentation of a consolidated budget to the Elder Board for approval, and presentation to the church for approval at the Annual Meeting. The Elder Board will also appoint at least three church members to assist the Treasurer in donation accountability.

## ***Section (H) – Nominating Committee***

Elders will be selected through a comprehensive Nominating Committee process. The Nominating Committee(s) will be comprised of up to five church members and one alternate in good standing, all appointed by the Elders. The Nominating Committee will be appointed as needed (typically on an annual basis) and will serve for a minimum of one year and no more than three consecutive years. The Senior Pastor will serve as a non-voting advisor to the Nominating Committee. The Committee will select, by an interview process, potential Elder candidates. Members of the Congregation are encouraged to submit names of candidates to the Committee for consideration. The Committee will forward potentially qualified and interested candidates to the Elder Board for additional interviews, if needed, and final approval for presentation to the Congregation for a vote. The Elder Board will publicize the final list of candidates at least three weeks before a church business meeting.

**Qualifications:** Nominating Committee must be comprised of church members in good standing.

## **Article VI – Operational Procedures**

### ***Section (A) – Meetings***

The church will have an Annual Meeting for the presentation of reports, approval of the annual budget, and filling elected positions for the ensuing year.

The church may be called together for a business meeting by the Chairman of the Elder Board or any ten voting church members. The meetings will be chaired by the Chairman of the Elder Board or his appointee. Notice of meetings, together with sufficient detail describing the matters to be discussed, will be announced at the morning worship service two consecutive Sundays preceding the time of the meeting. At such meetings, no matters will be voted on except those announced beforehand.

### ***Section (B) – Voting***

Voting privilege is given to members eighteen years of age or over. Absentee votes will be accepted until the beginning of the meeting for which the vote is intended. The Congregation will approve annual budgets and choose persons to fill all elected positions by a two-third majority of all votes cast.

### ***Section (C) – Fiscal Year***

The church fiscal year will be January 1 through December 31.

### ***Section (D) – Ordination and Licensing***

Men requesting either ordination to the Gospel Ministry or licensing to preach will be satisfactorily examined by the Senior Pastor and Elder Board. No one may be ordained or licensed unless he is in agreement with the doctrinal position of the church as defined in The Statement of Faith (Article II). Should any ordained or licensed individual change his doctrinal position, his ordination or license will be withdrawn.

## **Article VII – Church Discipline**

Discipline is intended to admonish and restore an erring brother or sister to repentance. It is not to be administered as punishment, but is rather a mandate of scripture that has three purposes: to restore and reconcile an erring believer (Matt. 18:15, II Cor. 2:5-8), to maintain church purity (I Cor. 5:6-7), and to serve as a deterrent from sin (I Tim. 5:20). Specific steps, to be delivered in a "spirit of gentleness" (Gal. 6:1), include:

1. A believer will approach the erring person in confidence in an effort to achieve repentance (Matt. 18:15; I Cor. 5:6-7; II Thess. 3:6, 14-15; I Tim. 5:19-20; Titus 3:10).
2. If the previous step fails, the believer and one or two additional witnesses will confidentially confront the erring person (Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16).
3. If previous steps fail to result in repentance the matter must be presented by the Elders at a special meeting limited to church members, still as an appeal for repentance. The erring member will have an opportunity to address the other church members relative to the matter (Matt. 18:17a; I Cor. 5:3-5; 6:1-5).
4. As a final measure, if all else has failed, the erring member is placed on public corrective exclusion where anyone in the church body, except for immediate family and contractual business arrangements, is forbidden fellowship with him or her (Matthew 18:17b).

## **Article VIII – Dissolution**

No part of the net earnings of this corporation will ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director, or officer of the corporation or any private individual and no donor, member, director or officer of the corporation or any private individual will be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets. Upon dissolution, any assets or debts of the corporation must be distributed to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as one organized exclusively for Christian beliefs and purposes similar to those outlined in Articles II and III of these By-Laws or a similar church willing to accept the assets or debts.

## **Article IX – Amendments to the By-Laws**

Any church member can propose changes to the By-Laws by submitting the proposal in writing to the Elder Board for consideration. Proposed changes approved by the Elder Board, or an amendment presented by ten or more voting members, must be presented to the congregation at least two weeks prior to a business meeting. A proposed change must be approved by two-thirds of the members casting ballots.