



Highlands Baptist Church Constitution And Bylaws

Updated: May 2018

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The name of the church is Highlands Baptist Church of Edmonton, Alberta

In affiliation with the Canadian Baptist of Western Canada

It is registered under the Religious Societies Act (#540011079)

CONSTITUTION

1. **Mission Statement:**

We are a church for the neighbourhood, growing healthy and whole in: Worship, Formation and Mission.

2. **Purpose Statement:**

The purpose of the Highlands Baptist church is to advance the Christian Religion by making disciples of Jesus Christ, in accordance with the teaching of the Bible, and in a manner consistent with the vision and values of the congregation.

- By means of holding regular public gatherings for worship
- By means of teaching the tenets, doctrines, and observances of the Christian Religion through Sunday sermons, mid-week education, small group gatherings, children and youth ministries, and other ministries and gatherings consistent with the purpose of the congregation
- By means of serving the practical and spiritual needs of our neighbours, adherents and members

The Highlands Baptist Church shall be operated without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or assets of the church shall be used solely to promote its objectives.

2. **Scriptural Authority**

We believe that the Bible is the sufficient and authoritative revelation of God in everything affecting our faith and our practice, and obedience to its teachings is binding upon all Christians (2 Timothy 3:16 - 17).

3. **Confession:**

We confess (believe, live, practice, and experience) that:

Jesus Christ is the Creator and Saviour of the World and deserves our unending devotion as Lord. (John 1:1 - 5)

Our devotion to Christ impacts every dimension of our personal conduct. (Ephesians 5:1 - 4; 15 - 17)

Christ has given the Church to be the people of God in the world (John 17:6 - 8) so the Church is to advance the Kingdom of God in the world. (Matthew 28:19 - 20)

We believe the core doctrines found in the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty¹
 Creator of heaven and earth.²
 I believe in Jesus Christ³, God's only Son, our Lord;⁴
 Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,⁵
 Born of the Virgin Mary,⁶
 Suffered under Pontius Pilate,⁷
 Was crucified⁸, died⁹, and was buried.¹⁰
 He descended to the dead.¹¹
 On the third day he rose again;¹²
 He ascended into heaven,¹³
 He is seated at the right hand of the Father,¹⁴
 And He will come again to judge the living and the dead.¹⁵
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,¹⁶
 The holy universal Church,¹⁷
 The communion of Saints,¹⁸
 The forgiveness of sins,¹⁹
 The resurrection of the body,²⁰
 And the life everlasting.²¹
 Amen.

1. Isaiah 44:6, 45:5. **2.** Genesis 1:1, John 1:3, Acts 14:15. **3.** Luke 2:11, John 20:28. **4.** John 3:16, Acts 14:15. **5.** Luke 1:35. **6.** Luke 1:27. **7.** Luke 23:24. **8.** John 19:20, Acts 4:10. **9.** 1Corinthians 15:3. **10.** 1Corinthians 15:4. **11.** Ephesians 4:9, 1Corinthians 15:20-22. **12.** 1Corinthians 15:4. **13.** Mark 16:19, Luke 24:51, Acts 1:11. **14.** Mark 16:19, Hebrews 1:13. **15.** 2Timothy 4:1, John 5:22. **16.** John 15:26; 16:7-8, 13. **17.** Galatians 3:28. **18.** Hebrews 10:25, Acts 2:44. **19.** Luke 7:48. **20.** 1Thessalonians 4:16, Romans 8:23, 1Corinthians 15:52-54. **21.** John 10:28.

4. **Baptism:**

We practice baptism by immersion as was the practice of the New Testament.

Baptism is a confession of faith. Each baptism expresses the faith of the candidate as well as that of the church. Baptism is also an oath of solemn obligation. When people are baptized with an understanding of its meaning and significance, they are expressing a vow that they will walk with Christ and the universal church in newness of life. The act of Baptism is a powerful witness to all those who observe it. (Matthew 3:13 - 17)

5. **Communion:**

Communion is both a memorial and a symbol. It is observed in remembrance of Jesus, His life, His death, His resurrection, His words and His works. It is a visible expression of the Gospel and it is in the light of the Gospel that it is understood. The Bread and the wine speak of Christ's Body and Blood, the price He so willingly paid for our salvation.

6. Congregational Government

A) Believers' Church

We believe that Jesus Christ chooses to form his church by bringing together believers for the purpose of worship, witness, fellowship and ministry (both spiritual and social). We recognize the church universal as all who truly profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They also profess their understanding of the church as being visibly expressed in local congregations. (Matt. 18:20, Col. 1:18, 1 Cor. 12:27)

B) The Priesthood of All Believers

The Bible affirms the value of each person as having been created in the image of God, and also declares each person morally responsible for his/her own nature and behavior. We believe that inherent in the worth of each person is also the right and competency of each individual personally to deal directly with God through Jesus Christ. This principle also suggest our responsibility to serve other believers in intercession and nurture: we are priests to each other. (John 20:21, Rom. 12:4 - 9, Heb. 13:20 - 21, 1 Peter 4:10 - 11)

C) Local Church Autonomy

Government in a local church is founded upon the principles of

- i) The Lordship of Christ
- ii) The priesthood of all believers
- iii) The authority of the scriptures and
- iv) The guidance of the Holy Spirit

Christ, present in the lives of congregational members, leads them corporately to discover and obey his mind and will. Such congregational government calls for and expresses the equality and responsibility of believers under the Lordship of Christ. (Col. 1:18, Eph. 4:11 - 16, Matt. 18:20, 1Peter 5:2 - 3, 1Tim. 3:1 - 7)

D) Freedom and Equality

Emerging from our convictions about the priesthood of all believers, we affirm that in Jesus Christ all people are equal. Each one is free to be in relationship with God and to express a faith that is not coerced. Faith cannot be predetermined by someone else, but is the right of and responsibility of each individual as they seek a relationship with God based on their own personal commitments. (2Cor. 3:17, Gal. 5:1)

6. Congregational Government cont.

E) Elders

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd of Highlands Baptist Church who communicates His will through the Bible and through the Holy Spirit. He also shepherds the flock through the Elders to whom He has given the responsibility of local church leadership. Highlands Baptist Church is governed by Godly called elders and is referred to as the Elders Board. The authority and the responsibility for day-to-day ministry matters and the spiritual health of the church is delegated to the Senior Pastor and his/her team, under the oversight of the Elders Board. They are to lead in our Lord's model of servant leadership. (Rom. 12:8, 1Tim. 4:14; 5:17 - 22, Heb. 13:7, 17, 1Peter 5:1 - 4, Mark 10:42 - 45)

BYLAWS

Church Structure

Highlands Baptist Church consists of members and is governed by a Church Board with pastoral staff and several Church officials, as described below. All Elders, pastoral staff, and Church officials must be members of the Church and are elected by the Church members. They must be members in good standing and role models in their ethical and moral conduct and behavior, and in their participation in the life of the Church.

1. Members

A Church member in good standing meets the membership requirements set out by the Bylaws, and lives by biblical principles and the principles laid out in the Church Constitution.

2. Board of Elders

A) The Board of Elders, also known as the Church Board, Elders Board, or the Board, consists of at least 5 Elders, one being the Chair, one being the Senior Pastor, and one being the Finance Elder.

B) Elders (except for the Senior Pastor) are elected for a three-year term and are directly accountable to the Church. The terms for Elders are overlapping, with the terms of one or two Elders ending each year. When a vacancy occurs before a term is expired, the replacing Elder completes the term.

3. Elders

A) An Elder is a church official elected by Church members to have spiritual oversight of the Church, to serve on the Board of Elders, to make decisions, and to provide leadership in the Church.

B) An Elder confesses Jesus Christ is Lord and is elected based on being respected by the congregation as a person of wisdom, character, and spiritual maturity. He or she is a proven leader in the Church, is able to contribute well to the decision making of the Church with their gifts and abilities, and fully participate in the life of the Church.

BYLAWS

Church Structure Continued

4. Senior Pastor

A) The Senior Pastor is the under-shepherd of the congregation under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and is the Elder who ministers the Word. The Senior Pastor's major task is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, minister to the spiritual needs of the congregation and to assist in training the congregation to use their spiritual gifts for the work of the ministry in the world. It is the Senior Pastor's role to provide inspiration and leadership in all phases of church life. Every effort should be made to relieve the Senior Pastor of onerous details that prevent important tasks from being carried out.

B) The Senior Pastor, by the virtue of his or her position, is a member of the Church and a member of the Church Board.

C) The Senior Pastor is an ex-officio member of all Church committees, sub-committees and task forces except for the Personnel Committee.

D) The Senior Pastor:

- i) provides spiritual leadership to the Church and works in conjunction with the Church Board to plan spiritual leadership and then to implement it with other staff members and Church lay people;
- ii) works in conjunction with the Church Board in formulating and recommending policy;
- iii) exercises general supervisory authority over all staff members of the Church (excluding staffing changes); and
- iv) has the right to be notified of all meetings of the Church Board and to be present and fully participate at all such meetings.

BYLAWS

Church Structure Continued.

5. Associate Pastors

A) Associate Pastors may be called by the Church for the purpose of undertaking specific ministries as the Senior Pastor and the Church Board determine necessary for the Church.

B) Associate Pastors, by virtue of their position, are members of the Church but not members of the Church Board.

C) Associate Pastors are accountable to the Senior Pastor.

6. Other Staff Members

Other staff may be hired by the Church Board for the purpose of ensuring specific tasks are implemented as the Senior Pastor and Church Board determine are necessary for the Church.

7. The Moderator

A) The Moderator is a church official who presides over all Church meetings, calls all Church meetings, and with the Church Clerk and Board Chair, establishes the agenda. The Moderator is also the final interpreter of the Constitution and By-laws, and can be referred to as a last resort to resolve disputes

B) The Moderator is elected by the Church members for a three-year term and is responsible directly to the Church.

BYLAWS

Church Structure Continued.

8. The Church Clerk

A) The Church Clerk is a church official who keeps minutes of all Church meetings, keeps records of correspondence involving the business of the Church, and preserves Church records.

B) The Church Clerk is elected by the Church members and is directly responsible to the Church.

9. The Stewardship Secretary

The Stewardship Secretary is a church official who is in charge of the record of envelope offerings, memorial gifts and other financial gifts made to the Church where an acknowledgement or receipt is required. The Stewardship Secretary is elected by the Church members for a three-year term, and is responsible to the Finance Elder.

BYLAWS

Operating Procedures

1. Method of Support

The Church receives financial support primarily by the generous giving of its members and adherents in accordance with 2Corinthians 9:7

2. Membership

- A) A church member is any person who has signed the Highlands Baptist Church Membership Covenant (Appendix 1) for the current ministry year. Church members have the right to vote at Church meetings and only Church members in agreement with the Confession in the Church Constitution can be Church officials.
- B) Membership is defined by a commitment to the Membership Covenant. This commitment is renewed by signing a copy of Appendix 1. A record of the signed copies will be kept by the church Clerk.
- C) An annual Membership Service is held for renewal of Church membership by re-signing the Membership Covenant. Those unable to attend the service, or new congregants, are able to request and receive membership by committing to the Membership Covenant with Church elder acting as witness.
 - i) Members of the Church prior to June 2014 may retain their ongoing membership at discretion of the Elders' Board under the heading "Grandfathered". If and when they decide to participate in the covenant membership process, their membership will need to be renewed each year as outlined in 2b).
- D) Those unable to participate in church activities due to health or disability, but wish to continue their connection with the Church, may be made Lifetime Members. The list of Lifetime Members is reviewed and maintained by the Elders' Board and Church Clerk. Lifetime members are non-voting members and are not part of the calculation of quorum at Church meetings.
- E) The Church can only terminate a member's membership by a 75% majority vote (excluding blanks and abstentions) at a Church meeting. A Church member can terminate their membership in writing.

BYLAWS

Operating Procedures Continued

3. Ministries in the Church

A) The day-to-day ministries of the Church are coordinated by staff members and Church lay people under the direction of the Senior Pastor, based on approved direction from the Church Board.

B) The Senior Pastor is directly accountable to the Church Board for all ministries within the Church.

4. Board of Elders Meetings

A) The Board of Elders holds regular meetings. Any Church member or adherent may inform the Board Chair of their desire to address the Board. The Board Chair will notify the person making the request when the schedule will allow them to attend and how much time they will be given. Church members and adherents are not privy to confidential matters discussed by the Board.

B) A quorum for a meeting of the Board is two less than the total number of Board members, with a minimum of three.

C) Each year, the Church Board selects an Elder to be chair. The Senior Pastor cannot serve as chair.

BYLAWS

Operating Procedures Continued

5. Committees and Task Forces

A) Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee meets as needed to make recommendations to the Church Board concerning hours, salaries, and benefits for staff. The Committee also meets if the need arises to resolve issues raised by staff members. The Committee reports to the Church Board and consists of the Chair of the Church Board, the Finance Elder, the Nominating Committee Chair and a member-at-large. The Committee is chaired by the Chair of the Church Board. Where a conflict between any of the paid staff and the Senior Pastor cannot be resolved, the matter is referred to the Personnel Committee for resolution.

B) The Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee meets as needed to recommend members for Church official positions. The Committee consists of two Elders, appointed by the Church Board, and three members at large, elected by the Church members for a three-year term. The Committee selects a committee member to be chair.

C) Pastoral Selection Task Forces

A Pastoral Selection Task Force is formed, as needed, to recommend a candidate for the position of Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor. The membership of the Task Force is recommended by the Church Board and approved by the Church members. It includes at least two Elders, the Sr. Pastor, and at least two members at large. The Task Force selects a task force member to be chair.

BYLAWS

Operating Procedures Continued

6. Church Meetings and Reports

- A) Church meetings are held for matters requiring approval of the Church members.
- B) Church meetings may be held anytime of the year. They are called by the Moderator at the request of the Church Board or Nominating Committee, or by a written request signed by at least ten Church members. The dates and times for Church meetings are decided by the Moderator in consultation with the Chair of the Church Board.
- C) The date, time, and agenda for Church meetings, as well as available motions and documents for approval, are posted at least one month in advance for changes to the Constitution and Bylaws and at least two weeks in advance otherwise.
- D) The quorum for a Church meeting is 30% of the first 100 active members and 10% of the remaining active members.
- E) An annual Church meeting is held between April 15th and June 30th.
 - i) At this meeting, the budget for the next fiscal year is approved.
 - ii) At this meeting, the annual report for the previous Ministry year is approved. The report includes submissions from the Senior Pastor, the Chair of the Church Board, Church Clerk and the ministry leaders in the Church.
- F) Annual reports from the Finance Elder, the Auditors, and the Stewardship Secretary will be published between September 15th and December 31st.
- G) Where neither the Constitution nor the Bylaws apply, then the Rules of Order for all Church meetings is the most recent edition of Bourinot's Rules of Order.

BYLAWS

Operating Procedures Continued

7. Finances

- A) The Church's fiscal year and the Church's ministry year runs from September 1st to August 31st.
- B) The Church Clerk, the Chair of the Church Board, and the Finance Elder, exercise the powers of the Church in matters pertaining to Church property. Upon instruction of the Church, they can sign all official documents and provide for their security.
- C) The Finance Elder is responsible for the following financial tasks:
 - i) compiling and presenting the annual budget to the Church;
 - ii) establishing and implementing all Church financial policies, procedures, and financial controls, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and in consultation with the Church Board and the Church;
 - iii) ensuring through regular appraisals that appropriate fire and liability insurance coverage is maintained for Church employees, volunteers and properties; and,
 - iv) providing regular financial and stewardship information to the Church through monthly and annual financial assessments and reporting, through communicating proper methods and procedures for use of Church financial and physical resources, and through stewardship emphasis programs.
- D) The Stewardship Secretary is responsible for keeping an accurate record of all monies received through the envelope system and supplies each contributor a statement of giving at the end of the fiscal year. With the exception of summary reports, any knowledge acquired and all materials prepared by the Stewardship Secretary are confidential and are not released or disclosed to any party other than the individual envelope holder.
- E) The Church's financial books for the current year are reviewed by two people appointed as auditors. The auditor's report in writing to the Church. The auditors are nominated by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Church members.
- F) The board will hire an external auditor every fifth year.

BYLAWS

Operating Procedures Continued

8. Policy Development

Policy matters involving the operational procedures of the Church are referred in writing from staff members and Church lay people, under the direction of the Senior Pastor, to the Church board for approval.

9. Changes to Staff

- A) The Senior Pastor and Elders (in consultation with the Personnel Committee) determines staffing needs and present proposals concerning changes in staff hours and salary to the Church Board for approval including details of any new staff positions, time frame and cost implications). The Church Board then take the new staffing positions proposal to the Church for ratification.
- B) For the calling of a new Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor, a Pastoral Selection Task Force is formed to review potential candidates and recommend a candidate to the Church. Church members then vote to approve the hiring of a new Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor. The Task Force follows the pastoral selection guidelines of the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada while reviewing candidates.
- C) The Senior Pastor, an Associate Pastor, or a Church official can be removed from his or her position only after a majority vote of the Church Board and a 75% majority vote (excluding blanks and abstentions) at a Church meeting.

BYLAWS

Operating Procedures Continued

10. Changes to Church Officials

The Nominating Committee nominates members to fill vacant or soon-to-be vacant Church official positions (striving to fill positions prior to completion of the term of office). The Nominating Committee provides a list of candidates to the Church Clerk at least two weeks prior to a Church meeting. Church members may nominate additional candidates by submitting their recommendations to the committee.

11. Reviewing and Amending the Constitution Bylaws

- A) Amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws are submitted by the Church Board to the Church members for approval. Approval requires 75% majority vote (excluding blanks and abstentions) at a Church meeting.
- B) Proposed amendments are posted in writing at least one month in advance. For comparison purposes, the current text is posted along with the amendments.
- C) The Constitution and Bylaws are reviewed at least every five years. The revision date is based on the date the last change was adopted, or the previous revision date.
- D) Minor error relating to spelling, punctuation, or transcribing can be corrected by the unanimous vote of the Church Board. These corrections are reported to the Church.

12. Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the Church, the assets of the Church after the payment of all debts and liabilities shall be transferred to the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada, formerly known as the Baptist Union of Western Canada.

Highlands Baptist Church of Edmonton, Alberta
In affiliation with the Canadian Baptist of Western Canada
Registered under the Religious Societies Act (#540011079)

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a church for the neighbourhood, growing healthy in
Worship, Formation and Mission

MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

As a member of Highlands Baptist Church, I covenant (commit) for the upcoming year to:

- 1) Authentically¹ participate in worship² together with the church body³,
and to make it a priority to do so⁴.
- 2) Pursue⁵ Christ-likeness⁶ through communal and individual discipleship⁷.
- 3) Be Christ's redeeming presence⁸ by humbly participating together with the church body in acts of
justice, mercy, and love⁹ within our context¹⁰.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Witness: _____

(when membership covenant is being signed on date other than Membership Sunday)

1. John 4:23-24; Isaiah 6:1-3
2. Psalm 96:3
3. Psalm 107:31-32
4. Hebrews 10:24-25
5. Psalm 1:2-3; Romans 8:38-39; Romans 12:2-3
6. Philippians 3:10; Galatians 2:20
7. Matt 28:19-20; Col 1:9-10
8. Genesis 12:1-3; 2 Corinthians 2:14-15; Mark 16:15
9. Micah 6:8
10. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23