

**BY LAWS**  
**BEAL HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**1 THE CONGREGATION**

- 1.1 The classes of membership of this church shall be non-communicant, communicant, voting, and associate members as defined in the Constitution of this church.
- 1.2 The responsibilities of the congregation of this church include:
  - 1.2.1 Call of the pastor;
  - 1.2.2 Election of ruling elders and deacons;
  - 1.2.3 Regular review and evaluation of the total ministry of this church;
  - 1.2.4 Regular review of the total ministry of the denomination;
  - 1.2.5 Other ecclesiastical matters not delegated to the pastor or other officers of this church by these bylaws.
- 1.3 The meetings of the congregation shall be governed by the following rules:
  - 1.3.1 The pastor of this church shall ordinarily be the moderator of all congregation meetings.
  - 1.3.2 The regular stated meeting will be the first Sunday of December each year.
  - 1.3.3 Regular meetings of the congregation will be called by the Session in the following manner:
    - 1.3.3.1 By written announcement printed in the weekly bulletins for two weeks to notify all voting members, stating the purpose of the meeting in the announcement;
    - 1.3.3.2 And by oral announcement from the pulpit on the two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting, stating the purpose of the meeting in the announcement, and with the provision that the meeting may be held on that second Sunday.
    - 1.3.3.3 Special meetings of the congregation must be held in response to a majority vote of the Session or in response to a petition signed by at least one-fourth (1/4) of the voting membership. Such meetings are to be called by the Session in the same manner as regular meetings (Sections 1.3.3.1 and 1.3.3.2 of this Article). Unless otherwise stipulated, such meetings are to be held within thirty (30) days of Session action or receipt of petition by the Session.
    - 1.3.3.4 A quorum for any regular or special meeting shall consist of one-fourth (1/4) of the voting members, except in the case of calling or

dismissing a pastor, or amending the constitution, in which case it shall be prescribed in Article 1 or Article 4 of these bylaws, or in Article 6 of the Constitution.

1.3.3.5 All voting members present shall be entitled to vote at congregation meetings.

1.3.3.6 In the conduct of meetings, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall be used to decide any parliamentary question not covered by the Constitution and these Bylaws.

1.3.3.7 The congregational meetings of this church may be resolved into Corporation meetings when corporate matters are to be considered, with the provisions that only corporation members be permitted to vote, and that the president of the Corporation presides at the corporate meeting. Only those voting members of the congregation 18 years of age and older may vote as members of the corporation.

## **2 PASTOR**

2.1 The office of minister is first in the church, both for dignity and usefulness. The person who fills the office has in Scripture obtained different names expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor. As he serves Christ in His church, he is termed minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. And, as he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God, and in humility he is the servant of Christ, separated unto the Gospel of God.

2.2 The pastor of this church shall have general oversight of the spiritual life, regular service, and ordination and installation of elders and deacons. He shall be *ex-officio* a member of all committees of this church's officers. The preaching of the Word of God in regular sermons is the responsibility of the pastor. The administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the blessing of the people by the divine benediction are, in orderly procedure, reserved to the pastor, or other ordained minister who may fill the pulpit in the absence of the pastor.

## **3 CALLING OF A PASTOR**

3.1 A pastor shall not be called to serve this church except by congregation approval using a secret written ballot at a congregation meeting called for the purpose of voting on a candidate. Said meeting is to be held within ten days of the candidating sermon, which must be heard by the congregation. Prior to the vote on any candidate, the congregation shall be advised of the

basic terms of the call. A quorum for this meeting shall consist of fifty percent of all voting members, and approval to extend a call shall consist of a minimum of seventy-five percent vote in favor of acceptance by those present on the first ballot.

3.2 A pulpit nominating committee shall be formed and used in the selection of each pastor of this church as need arises. The pulpit nominating committee shall be elected at a duly called special meeting of the congregation. Its size, in number, shall be at least that of the session. All active elders shall serve as representatives on this committee. The remaining members of the committee shall be voting members to be elected by the congregation.

3.2.1 The Clerk of Session shall convene the first meeting of the committee for the purpose of electing officers of the committee. The minimum offices to be filled shall be chairman and secretary.

3.2.2 The responsibilities of the pulpit committee are as follows:

3.2.2.1 The committee shall adopt a minimum and maximum set of terms for basic salary, expenses and other allowances, vacation time, etc., which shall receive approval from the Session before terms are discussed with any of the list of possible candidates. The committee shall also receive approval from the Session for a budget, or guide for expenditures, for the effective functioning of the committee.

3.2.2.2 The committee shall prepare a list of possible candidates. Each one on this list is to receive identical, brief, descriptive statements of this church as approved by the Session. The statements are to include the statement of purpose (Article II of the Constitution), current membership, current attendance at all weekly services, a brief history of this church, the date the pulpit became vacant, an estimate of growth potential, and any other information considered pertinent. The committee is to send with each statement a request for the individual to respond with a biographical and professional resume, a personal theological statement, and a list of at least three references. Each possible candidate contacted by the committee must be informed of the committee's ultimate decision regarding his candidacy.

3.2.2.3 The committee shall contact the references submitted and request information about preaching ability, pastoral ability, administrative ability, basic Christian character, and any other pertinent facts. It may then decide to rule out some or all of the possible candidates.

3.2.2.4 Upon arriving at a consensus decision for a selected candidate, the committee must review the decision with the Session which must approve the selection prior to the committee either

- 3.2.2.4.1 Inviting the candidate to the church to preach and to be interviewed by the committee in private, or
- 3.2.2.4.2 Going to the church of the candidate to hear him preach and to interview him in private.
- 3.2.2.5 The committee shall prepare a list of incisive questions to assist them in evaluating each man in the personal interview with them. The questions should seek to point out such things as the man's understanding of the purpose of the church (locally, denominationally, and universally), his attitude regarding the role his wife and family will play in the work, his positions with regard to local cultural situations such as sports, and clubs and societies, and whether he has the degree of commitment needed for the particular task. The same list shall be used for each possible candidate. During the same interviews, the proposed terms of the call should be discussed and reaction to them noted.
- 3.2.2.6 When the pulpit committee has decided on a candidate, it will make arrangements for the candidate to spend a minimum of three days, including at least a Sunday, with this church. The schedule is to be planned so that the maximum number of members of the congregation will have an opportunity to meet the candidate.
- 3.2.3 When the congregation ratifies a call to a candidate, he shall be notified in the manner prescribed in BCO20-6. The call shall not be considered effective until the requirements of BCO 20-6 have been met. When the congregation decides not to ratify a call, the candidate must be informed by the pulpit committee.

#### **4 REMOVING A PASTOR**

- 4.1 A pastor may be removed only by following BCO 23 & 24, and other relevant passages.

#### **5 OTHER PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS**

- 5.1 The congregation, in consultation with the Session, may choose to call a Pastor, Co-Pastors, and Associate Pastors as it may deem fit as outlined in Chapter 3 of these By-Laws and the applicable portions of the BCO.
  - 5.1.1 The relationships of the Co-Pastors and Associate Pastors to the Church is determined by the congregation.
  - 5.1.2 The Pastor, Co-Pastor(s), and Associate Pastor(s) shall serve as members of the Session.
  - 5.1.3 The Session may choose to call Assistant Pastors, under the provisions of BCO 20-1 and 13-2.
    - 5.1.3.1 The relationship(s) of the Assistant Pastor(s) to the Church is determined by the Session.

5.1.3.2 The Assistant Pastor (s) is (are) not a member(s) of the Session, but may be appointed on special occasions to moderate the Session under the provisions of BCO 12-4.

## **6 THE SESSION**

- 6.1 The Session of this church shall be the pastor (s), co-pastor(s) and associate pastor(s), and together with the installed ruling elders, as described in BCO 12.
- 6.2 The qualifications of the ruling elders are outlined in the Scriptures, especially in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- 6.3 The Session shall be responsible to maintain the spiritual welfare of the church; to supervise the affairs and activities of the church and any organization that is a part of this church; and to receive reports from and review the activities of all organizations of this church. Certain powers and responsibilities included as duties of the Session may be delegated to other organizations or to individuals within the church, but such powers and responsibilities shall always be subject to the discretion and review of the Session.
- 6.4 The Session regularly shall supervise and evaluate the work of the pastor. As part of this responsibility, the Session shall meet with the pastor approximately two months prior to the annual congregation meeting to evaluate the progress of the work of the church, the areas of need in that work, and the adequacy of the pastor's execution of his responsibilities. The results of these meetings shall be summarized and presented to the congregation at the congregation meeting.
- 6.5 The term of office for ruling elder in this church is perpetual.
- 6.6 The Session can be of any reasonable size over the minimum of two, dependent on the number of ruling elders elected by the congregation.
- 6.7 The Session shall hold regular business meetings at least quarterly, with exceptions as the Session may approve. Special meetings may be called at any time by the pastor, or by the Clerk of Session upon the written request of one-third of the ruling elders presently active on the Session.
  - 6.7.1 In addition to the moderator, who shall be the pastor, the Session shall elect annually a clerk from among the ruling elders.
  - 6.7.2 The Session may establish standing and special committees and determine their composition, functions, and terms of service.
  - 6.7.3 The Session shall not incur the congregation into indebtedness in excess of five percent of the general fund budget per transaction without approval of the congregation.
  - 6.7.4 When the membership of this church shall reach 200 communicant members, the Session shall evaluate starting a sister church in another

part of the community. If, after due consideration the Session shall conclude that the Lord does not appear to be opening up that possibility, they shall encourage this church in its growth. The Session shall, however, be required to evaluate the same possibility with the addition of each 25 members.

6.7.5 The Session shall ordinarily appoint at least one member of Session as a commissioner to accompany the pastor to each presbytery meeting, and this church shall underwrite all expenses incurred by the pastor and those elders in their attendance.

6.8 Elders may leave office or be removed from office only through those means applicable to their situation as outlined in BCO 24-6 and 24-8, or may request designation as elder emeritus as outlined in BCO 24-9.

## **7 THE DIACONATE**

7.1 This Church may elect deacons as it deems necessary.

7.1.1 The qualifications of the deacons are outlined in the Scriptures, especially in I Timothy 3:8-13, and BCO 9.

7.1.2 The term of office for deacon in this church is perpetual.

7.2 In the event that it is impossible for any reason to secure deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders.

7.3 The Board of Deacons shall be the deacons elected to serve.

7.3.1 The Board of Deacons can be of any reasonable size over the minimum of two, dependent on the number of deacons elected by the congregation.

7.3.2 The Board of Deacons shall annually elect one of its number as President, with the advice and consent of the Session.

7.3.3 The Board of Deacons shall elect annually one of its number as Secretary.

7.3.4 The Board of Deacons shall elect annually one of its number as Treasurer, with the advice and consent of the Session. The Session may choose to employ an Assistant Treasurer to assist the Treasurer in his duties.

7.3.5 The Pastor shall serve as an advisory member of the Board of Deacons, without vote.

7.4 The Board of Deacons shall meet at least quarterly, and whenever requested by the Session.

7.5 The duties of the Board of Deacons shall be

7.5.1 To minister to those of the church who are in need, such as the poor, the sick, and the shut-ins, to the friendless, and to those in distress.

- 7.5.2 To encourage the spirit of liberality in giving in the congregation, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed.
- 7.5.3 To have care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal. In matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation.
- 7.5.4 To keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation.
- 7.5.5 To have such other duties as may be delegated to it by the Session.
- 7.6 In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session.
- 7.6.1 The Board of Deacons shall submit its minutes to the Session at least quarterly for review.
- 7.6.2 The Board of Deacons shall keep detailed records of all funds and their distribution, and shall submit financial reports to the Session at least quarterly, and whenever requested by the Session.
- 7.7 The Board of Deacons may appoint committees from their board and the congregation from time to time to carry on their responsibilities as described herein.
- 7.8 If it is deemed expedient, the Session of the Church may select and appoint godly men and women of the congregation to assist the deacons in caring for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or need.
- 7.9 Deacons may leave office or be removed from office only through those means applicable to their situation as outlined in BCO 24-6 and 24-8, or may request designation as deacon emeritus as outlined in BCO 24-9.
- 7.10 In the event that the church does not have at least two deacons, the duties of the deacons shall devolve upon the Session.

## **8 CHURCH COUNCIL**

- 8.1 The Church Council shall consist of the Session and Board of Deacons meeting together at least quarterly.
- 8.2 The purpose of the Church Council is to enable conference upon matters of common interest to the Session and the Board of Deacons.

## **9 NOMINATION, ELECTION, & INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS**

- 9.1 The only elected offices in this church shall be those of ruling elder and deacon.
- 9.2 Nominees may be any men who are voting members of Beal Heights Presbyterian Church and who manifest the following qualifications:

- 9.2.1 They shall be men of God who already manifest those qualities mentioned in I Timothy 3:1-3 and Titus 1:5-9.
- 9.2.2 They shall be men who are well acquainted with God's Word and who are in the practice of teaching and defending it.
- 9.2.3 They shall be men who administer Christian discipline in their homes.
- 9.2.4 They shall give indication of being willing to take the time necessary to do the work involved in the office.

### 9.3 Procedure

- 9.3.1 During the month of July, and at such times as Session deems it necessary, the Session may solicit nominations for office in the Church. These nominations shall be made by communicant members of the congregation.
- 9.3.2 If one-fourth ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of the personas entitled to vote in the congregational meetings of this church shall request in writing that the Session call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional officers, it shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting.
- 9.4 Names shall be submitted in writing and shall be signed by the member making the nomination. The Session will then have the responsibility of contacting each nominee and ascertaining his qualifications as outlined in Section 2 above. No nominations will be allowed from the floor at any meeting pertaining to the election of officers.
- 9.5 Each nominee shall attend an extensive training program conducted by the pastor, or in case of his absence, by another minister or qualified elder. This program of training shall be concluded at least three weeks before the annual congregational meeting. The program shall include:
  - 9.5.1 A discussion of the scriptural qualifications for the office involved;
  - 9.5.2 The key points of the Presbyterian system of government and Reformed theology;
  - 9.5.3 The responsibilities involved in the office under consideration;
  - 9.5.4 An acquaintance with present and future programs for outreach to the lost by the local church;
  - 9.5.5 Having each person read the theological and governmental standards of the denomination during the time of the course.
  - 9.5.6 If a person has taken the training program within the past two years, or if he has served in that office in this Church, he need not repeat it unless he so desires. At the conclusion of the training program the Session shall conduct an examination of the candidates to determine those who shall stand for election.
  - 9.5.7 Elections shall be held ordinarily at the annual congregational

meeting each December and shall automatically be a part of that meeting.

9.5.8 The newly elected officers shall be ordained and/or installed within three weeks of their election at one of the stated Sunday services of the church.

## **10 THE CORPORATION**

10.1 The corporation of this church, through its duly elected officers, shall have sole title to its property, real, personal, or mixed, tangible or intangible, and shall be sole owner of any equity in any real estate, or any fund or property of any kind held by or belonging to it, or any board, society, committee, Sunday school class or branch thereof.

10.2 The membership of the corporation shall be all the voting members of this church age 18 or older.

10.3 The board of directors of the corporation ordinarily is the active ruling elders.

10.4 In cases where the number of active elders falls below the minimum number of directors for a not-for-profit corporation as required by the laws of the State of Oklahoma, such elders *emeriti*, active deacons, or other adult male communicant members may serve as directors as appointed by the corporation as need arises.

10.4.1 The board of directors must elect corporate officers of president, vice-president, and treasurer at the first session meeting after the annual meeting.

10.4.2 The secretary of the corporation is the clerk of the session.

10.4.3 The pastor of this Church may serve in an advisory capacity to the board of directors, without vote.

10.5 The responsibilities of the officers of the corporation are:

10.5.1 the buying, selling and mortgaging of property for the church,

10.5.2 the acquiring and conveying title to such property, the holding and defending title to the same,

10.5.3 the managing of any permanent special funds entrusted to them for the furtherance of the purposes of the church, provided that such duties do not infringe upon the powers and duties of the Session or of the Board of Deacons.

10.5.4 Other matters dealing with the physical concerns which the congregation delegates to the corporation.

10.5.5 Any items required by a not-for-profit corporation in the State of Oklahoma.

10.6 In buying, selling, and mortgaging real property such officers shall act

solely under the authority of the corporation, granted in a duly constituted meeting of the corporation.

10.7 The annual corporation meeting shall be held immediately following the annual congregational meeting. The corporation business shall be presided over by the proper corporate officer. The fiscal year of the corporation shall end December 31st. The procedures for calling congregational meetings shall hold true for the corporation meetings.

## **11 AMENDMENT**

11.1 The "By Laws" may be amended by a majority vote at any duly called meeting of the congregation, provided the amendment has been read at the time the meeting is announced.