

## MAGNOLIA BIBLE CHURCH CONSTITUTION

### A. Membership

1. A person desiring Membership in this church shall make his request known to an elder of the church, who shall arrange for an interview. The interview is to be conducted by an elder (or his appointee) and either a Servant Leader or a member of the pastoral staff.
2. A person shall qualify for Membership who:
  - a. confesses the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. (Acts 2:47)
  - b. agrees to submit to and support the Elders and Pastors of the church and to be governed by the inerrant, authoritative Word of God, and by the principles of government stated in this Constitution. (2 Thess. 3:14, Heb. 13:17)
  - c. commits to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and is willing to serve and give in the Church as a good steward of his time, treasure, and talent.
  - d. has already been baptized as a believer or agrees to be baptized at the next available opportunity. (Acts 2:41, 10:47)
  - e. agrees with paragraphs A through F of the *Doctrinal Statement of the Church*. (Gal. 1:9)
  - f. has been approved by all of the Elders. (I Cor. 5:10-11, 13)
  - g. In the case of a child of a member family, upon turning 18 years old, he/she must meet the above qualifications for membership.
3. A person may be dismissed from Membership who:
  - a. moves away from the area or desires to join another church.
  - b. is inactive for a year, failing to attend any of the services.
  - c. falls into discord with the ministry of the church.
  - d. is engaged in gross immorality, and who continues in such after attempt at restoration by the Elders. (Mt. 18:15-17, I Cor. 5: 1-13)

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Immediate and complete reinstatement is in order after true repentance and the offense has been removed. (2 Cor. 2:5-11)

- e. In case of 3.a, b, or c above, dismissal shall be obtained by unanimous vote of the Elders. In case of 3.d above, dismissal shall be obtained by unanimous vote of the Elders and agreement by 75% of the Membership.

**B. Church Government**

The ultimate authority for the leadership of this church resides in the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ. For purposes of implementing our Lord's will in the life of this church, the church as a body (the Membership) shall have the responsibility to recognize qualified men in the church as Elders, and to submit to their leadership. All ministries and activities of the church shall function under the authority of the Elders.

1. The Membership

- a. The Membership shall meet together (in a properly called business meeting) for the purpose of reviewing and approving the following:

	<u>Matter</u>	<u>Approval</u>
1)	Selection of Elder	75%
2)	Selection of Senior Pastor	75%
3)	Amendment to Constitution	75%
4)	Purchase of Real Property	51%
5)	Purchase of Other Property in excess of \$50,000	51%
6)	Construction of buildings in excess of \$50,000	51%

The Membership may also meet to review and provide input, but not approve, any other matter deemed appropriate or advisable by the Elders.

- b. Membership business meetings. The Senior Pastor, the chairman of the Elders, any 3 Elders, or 25% of the Membership (by written petition) may call a Membership business meeting. All meetings

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must be announced at least one week in advance and must include a public announcement in the Sunday morning service or services. Members in attendance shall constitute a quorum. The chairman of the Elders or his designate shall chair the Membership business meeting. The Elders may also use a written ballot or a poll of the Membership in the Sunday morning service/s in lieu of a separate meeting.

2. Elders

- a. Number: there shall be a minimum of three (3) Elders, and there may be up to a total of seven (7) Elders.
- b. Selection process.
  - 1) The Board of Elders will appoint a nominating committee made up of 2 Elders, 2 Servant Leaders, 2 at-large members from the membership and the pastor, to nominate men from among the Membership who meet the qualifications set forth in subparagraph c. below.
  - 2) A personal interview with the nominee will be held to confirm his qualifications, and to determine if he desires to serve as an elder.
  - 3) The Board of Elders must unanimously approve the nominees, after which they will be submitted to the Membership for approval.
- c. Qualifications for Elders: Elders shall evidence their qualifications for the office according to the provisions set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:5-9, and must prayerfully desire the office (I Timothy 3:1, I Peter 5:2)
- d. Term: The term of an Elder's service is three years.
  - 1) A new Elder is approved as follows:
    - i) Nominated Elders must be approved unanimously by the Elder Board and an affirmative membership vote of 75%.
    - ii) After completion of the first term, an Elder may serve a second three-year term upon consent of the Elder Board (unanimous minus one).

- 2) Having completed two terms, a willing Elder may serve an indefinite number of three-year terms. These terms are approved as follows:
    - i) Consent of the Elder Board (unanimous minus one) and affirmative membership vote of 75%.
  - 3) An Elder willing to serve again after a break in service is approved as follows:
    - i) Consent of the Elder Board (unanimous minus one) and affirmative membership vote of 75%.
  - 4) An Elder intending to rotate off the Elder Board shall make this known to either the Senior Pastor or the Chairman of the Elder Board with as much advance notice as possible, preferably at least one-year.
- e. Duties: Elders shall perform the following duties:
- 1) Oversee all functions and finances of the church. Every decision should be the Lord's will, discovered through Scripture and united prayer. (I Timothy 3:4-5, 5:17, Acts 11:30, 20:28, Heb. 13:17, I Peter 5:2)
  - 2) Lead by example, without lording it over the congregation. (I Peter 5:3)
  - 3) Be involved in some kind of teaching ministry. (I Timothy 5:2, Titus 1:9)
  - 4) Guard the purity of doctrine of the church. (Titus 1:9, II Timothy 2:2, Acts 20:28)
  - 5) Sensitively pastor and care for the flock of God. (I Peter 5:2, Acts 20:28)
  - 6) Visit and pray for the sick. (James 5:14)
  - 7) Interpret and apply this Constitution.
  - 8) Act as Corporate Officers of the church.
- f. Organization of the Elders:

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- 1) Officers. The Elders at the first meeting of each fiscal year shall elect a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary. The Chairman does not have authority above the other Elders, but shall be responsible for the organization of elder affairs, for communication with the Servant Leaders and the congregation, and for Membership business meetings.
  - 2) Meetings. The Elders shall meet at least once per month. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman. A legal meeting shall require the presence of at least 50% of the Elders. Periodic meetings shall be held with the Servant Leaders.
  - 3) Decision-making. All votes in Elder meetings will require a unanimous vote minus one. However, when a non-unanimous vote is taken, all sides shall have time to express their views, and a season of prayer for guidance on the issue should follow. Then, either a re-vote may be taken, or the topic may be tabled until the next meeting to allow for further prayer and examination of the issues. It is believed that Christ intended for unity in His Body, and unity in the church must begin in the attitudes and actions of its leaders.
- g. Removal of Elders. An elder must continue to meet the biblical qualifications. Upon failure to do so, the remaining Elders will seek to restore him to a qualified position. If they are unable to do so, they will ask for his resignation or remove him from office by unanimous vote of the remaining Elders. (I Timothy 5:19-20) Elders whose job or family responsibilities keep them from attending at least 75% of the worship services and Elder meetings must step down from service on the Elder Board. However, Elders whom God calls to serve in ministries that prevent them from active roles on the Board of Elders may be recognized as Advisory Elders for so long as their responsibilities keep them from serving on the Board of Elders.
3. Servant Leaders. Those who serve the church in a way that frees the Elders to focus on prayer and the ministry of God's Word (referred to as *diakonos* in Scripture). (Acts 6:1-6)
    - a. Number. The Elders may appoint as many Servant Leaders as they deem necessary. (Acts 6:3)

- b. Selection Process. The Elders shall develop procedures for the selection of Servant Leaders, involving the Membership in the selection process (in accordance with the Acts 6 model).
  - c. Qualifications. The Servant Leaders shall evidence their qualification for office according to the provisions set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. Both men and women may qualify to serve as Servant Leaders.
  - d. Term. Servant Leaders may be appointed for two year terms, and may be re-appointed by the Elders at their discretion.
  - e. Duties. The duties and parameters for financial decisions shall be determined by the Elders.
  - f. Organization of the Servant Leaders.
    - 1) Servant Leaders will not be organized as a Board.
    - 2) The Elders may appoint Servant Leaders to lead specific committees or teams (e.g. worship service committee, facilities and finance committee, service to the needy committee, etc.)
    - 3) The Elders will meet regularly with the Servant Leaders for coordination and direction.
  - g. Removal of a Servant Leader
    - 1) A Servant Leader must continue to meet the biblical qualifications and desire to serve.
    - 2) Servant Leaders may be removed from service by the unanimous vote of the Board Elders.
4. Pastor(s).
- a. For the edification of the church, God has gifted men as Pastors and/or Teachers (Ephesians 4:11-13), who may give themselves to the full-time service of the church. It is the responsibility of the Elders to recognize gifted men and thus provide for the edification of the flock (I Timothy 4:14)
  - b. Those who labor in the ministry of the church will be financially supported by the income of the church. (I Timothy 5:17, Galatians 6:6, I Cor. 9:8-12)

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- c. The Pastor/Teacher(s) will be recognized among the Elders if qualified, or else serve under the Elders. If an Elder, he shares the overall duties and qualification requirements set forth in Section B.2 above, but will not be subject to the Elder term limits stated in B.2.d
- d. Call of a Pastor/Teacher.
  - 1) He must subscribe to the doctrinal statement of the church and agree to be governed by its Constitution, and must be unanimously approved by the Elders.
  - 2) At the desire of the Board of Elders, the name of a candidate for Pastor/Teacher will be submitted to the Membership for its deliberation and approval at least two weeks prior to a properly called Membership Business Meeting.
  - 3) The dismissal of a Pastor/Teacher can be effected by his resignation or by the consent of the Board of Elders.

**C. Financial Matters**

- 1. No real property or fixed asset expenditures can be committed for or purchased by the corporation in an amount in excess of \$5,000 per annum, non-cumulative, nor any fixed indebtedness incurred without the unanimous approval of the Elders. No real or personal property can be accepted as a gift to the church without the prior approval of the Elders, unless such property is liquid in nature and has an immediately realizable or ascertainable cash value.
- 2. Planned expenditures of the Elders in excess of \$20,000 shall be made known to the Membership, at least two weeks prior to commitment. During this period, the members may raise any objections to the proposed expenditures. Such objections should be made known to an elder in private.
- 3. The title to all real property of the church shall be in the name of the church corporation. No member or group of members shall have any individual property rights to the assets of the corporation. In the event that the corporation is dissolved, any assets of the corporation shall be distributed to the organizations being supported by the missionary program of the church at that time. The share of each organization shall be paid to their mission boards, provided they qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal

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Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Elders shall determine.

**D. Amendments**

The Constitution may be amended by the Board of Elders. Copies of the proposed amendment(s) shall be distributed to the Membership at least two (2) weeks prior to a Membership Business Meeting, called to approve such amendment(s).

**E. Early Church Government**

Until Magnolia Bible Church has at least three (3) Elders, it will function under the authority of the Greater Houston Bible Church Association or the Elders of a church the said Association shall designate.

Amended 2/23/2020