

Vail Valley Baptist Church
Constitution, Bylaws,
Member Covenant, & Statement of Faith



Revised: Feb, 2022
Vail Valley Baptist Church
Constitution, Bylaws, & Member Covenant

CONSTITUTION

Section 1. Name

The name of this congregation shall be Vail Valley Baptist Church (Vail Valley or VVBC).

Section 2. Purpose

This church exists by the grace of God and for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose of all its activities. We will seek to glorify the God of Scripture (Eph. 3:21) by promoting His worship (John 4:23,24; 1 Cor. 3:16,17; 1 Pet. 2:5); edifying and equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (1 Cor. 12:27,28; 14:12,18,19,26; Eph. 4:11-16); spreading the gospel of Christ (Mat. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8); seeking whenever possible to both plant and strengthen other churches, promoting biblical faithfulness and purity in all the assemblies of Christ (Acts 15:36,41; Acts 16:5; Jude 3); and seeking to minister relief to the needy, especially among the saints (Rom. 15:26,27; Gal. 2:10; Gal. 6:10)

Section 3. Affiliation

We, the members of Vail Valley, declare our affiliation shall be with the following agencies and schools: the Catalina Baptist Association of Southern Arizona, the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, and any other evangelical organizations approved by the church.

Section 4. Declaration of Faith

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to a doctrinal statement based on the 1689 2ND London Baptist Confession. We consider this document to be an excellent expression of the teaching of the Word of God. We find it to be a confirmation of faith, a means of instruction, an aid in controversy, and a basis for church unity. However, we believe that the Scriptures alone are God-inspired, and therefore must be the supreme authority in all matters of belief and practice. We band together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, commanded by our Lord and personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. We believe the ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Any follower of Christ may partake of the waters of baptism and then of the elements of the Lord's Supper.

4.1 Signatories

Vail Valley is a signatory of the Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel. See Addendum A

Section 5. Member Covenant

Since we have committed ourselves to Jesus Christ and have been granted the acceptance, forgiveness, and redemption of God our Father, we covenant together as members of this church that with God's help through the guiding presence of his Spirit:

5.1 Our Commitment to God

- We will seek to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind, and to live before Him in such manner as will manifest this love in our worship, walk and witness.
- We agree to worship God scripturally, sincerely, and regularly.
 - We agree to worship only the one true and living God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), who has revealed Himself to us in the Scriptures, only through the mediation of His Son.
 - We will worship God in His appointed way in the Scriptures, excluding from our worship anything that He has not commanded while diligently observing those duties and ordinances of the New Covenant.
 - We will worship God sincerely, avoiding drawing near to Him with lips only, but offering that true heart worship which He seeks from us.

- We will worship God regularly, faithfully observing that public and corporate worship which He commands on the Lord's Day, while also being diligent to attend all the stated services of the church, except when legitimately hindered.
- We agree to walk before God in Biblical holiness of heart and life. We recognize the seriousness of taking upon ourselves the name of the one true God in our baptism and church membership.
- We agree not to take that glorious name lightly, but rather to adorn our profession with honor by ever seeking a closer walk with God through the means of grace which He has appointed.
- We will also pursue the salvation and sanctification of our children and other loved ones, by instructing them in God's truth, while also seeking to exemplify that truth in our godly walk before them.
- We further commit to honor God by our witness in this world, resisting the sins of this present evil age, while zealously endeavoring both by holy lives and faithful words to advance the Kingdom of Christ in this world by making known everywhere the one true God and the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

5.2 Our Commitment to the body of Believers in our church

- We will seek to love our neighbors as ourselves.
- We will love one another in this church according to the Scriptures.
- We will care for each other in temporal things, rejoicing together in God's blessings, bearing one another's burdens and seeking whenever possible to actively relieve each other in our trials and sufferings.
- We will care for each other spiritually, watching over one another's souls. We will each seek to help others on the way to heaven, not only by praying for each other, but also by scripturally reproving, rebuking and exhorting one another.
- We will work diligently for the peace and unity of this body by maintaining loving relationships with each other.
- We will seek to avoid sinning against each other in any way and be quick to repent and seek forgiveness when we have done so.
- We will be slow to take offense, forbearing with one another, and always ready for reconciliation in conflict, being mindful of the command of our Savior to secure it without delay.
- We pledge to diligently, sincerely and actively promote the well-being of this church, seeking to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrine and discipline.
- We will cheerfully submit to the Christ-appointed leaders of this church, while contributing cheerfully and regularly to the support of its ministry.
- We will endeavor each one to do all within our power to make this church that which Jesus Christ the Lord of the church desires it to be.

5.3 We will love our neighbors who are not part of this church.

- We will love all of our Christian neighbors, realizing that all true brothers in Christ are part of the same household of faith (Gal. 6:10).
- While seeking to faithfully hold to what we are convinced is taught in Holy Scripture, we will avoid all unholy sectarianism, seeking as far as possible to pursue and maintain the highest

degree of friendship and fellowship, while also promoting the temporal and spiritual welfare of all the family of God.

- We will love our unsaved neighbors, seeking also their temporal well-being. But we will especially, according to Christ's great commission, seek to make disciples of the lost by clearly and faithfully sharing the saving gospel with them.
- We will also endeavor to walk before them in true holiness so that we may adorn the saving gospel we share with them. We engage moreover to promote the spread of the gospel of Christ worldwide, by our prayers, finances, and whatever other scriptural means are available to us.

Anyone who is in substantial disagreement with the constitution or covenant of the church could not consistently submit to the church's teaching ministry. Therefore, to admit such a person to membership in this church would be unwise (Eph. 4:3) and unscriptural.

BYLAWS

Section 6. Membership

6.1 Statement of Policy

Membership in this church is open to all persons who have publicly testified to their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord and have given evidence of that faith by following the Lord in believer's baptism by immersion in water, and who are in agreement with the covenant and the statement of faith of this church.

6.2 Acceptance of Members

Membership in this church will be considered after one of the following:

- By scriptural baptism by immersion after profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.
- By testimony of their prior experience of conversion and scriptural baptism by immersion in another evangelical church of like faith and practice.
- By restoration to the church membership after the reconciliation process of church discipline.

Membership may be finalized after completing all the following requirements in this order:

- Successfully completing Vail Valley's membership class.
- Signing Vail Valley's member covenant.
- Being voted into membership by the current members of Vail Valley.

6.3 Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties listed in this church covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only members of this congregation shall be entitled to hold leadership roles in the church's ministries, whereas non-members and members alike are encouraged to attend and participate in this church's ministries. It is the privilege and responsibility of members, to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such matters as may be submitted to a vote. Only those of the membership of this church that are aged 18 and older may vote. Only members in good standing may have use of the church facilities for such occasions for the promotion of the Gospel and community flourishing in alignment with the Scripture and statement of faith of this body.

6.3.1 A member in good standing is one who is not under church discipline

6.3.2 Those renting from the church may have use of the facility in accordance with their rental agreements. Any other events, held by renters, require unanimous approval of the elder board and be agreement with the statement of faith and member covenant.

6.4 Discipline and/or Removal

Any member guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored in accordance with the Bible, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the church leadership, and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline should only be considered after individual private admonition has failed or in the case of egregious unrepentant sin (1 Corinthians 5:5).

This discipline's purpose being:

- Love for the individual (Matthew 22:39, John 13:35).
- For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Proverbs 15:5; 17:10; 25:12; 27:5, 1 Corinthians 4:14; 5:5, Ephesians 6:4, 1 Timothy 1:20; 3:4-5, Hebrews 12:1-11, Psalms 119:115).
- For the instruction and good of other Christians, as an example to them (Proverbs 13:20, Romans 15:14, 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 1 Timothy 5:20, Titus 1:11, Hebrews 10:24-25).
- For the purity of the church as a whole (1 Corinthians 5:6-7, 2 John 1:10, 2 Corinthians 13:10, Ephesians 5:27, Jude 24, Revelation 21:2).
- For the good of our corporate witness to non-believers (Proverbs 28:7, Matthew 5:13-16, John 13:35, Acts 5:10-14, Ephesians 5:11, 1 Timothy 3:7, 2 Peter 2:2, 1 John 3:10).
- And supremely for the glory of God by reflecting his holy character (Deuteronomy 5:11, 1 Kings 11:2, 2 Chronicles 19:2, Ezra 6:21, Nehemiah 9:2, Isaiah 52:11, Ezekiel 36:20, Matthew 5:16, John 15:8, Romans 2:24; 15:5-6, 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, Ephesians 1:4; 5:27, 1 Peter 2:12).

6.5 Membership Termination

Membership in this church may be terminated in the following ways: death, transfer to another church, exclusion by action of this church, inability to or lack of contact with a member for one calendar year, or by written request of the individual.

6.5.1 All termination of membership, due to lack of contact, must be by a unanimous vote of the Elders.

Section 7. Officers and Committees

7.1 Officers

All church officers must be members of this church in good standing. Officers of this church may include: pastors, elders, deacons, clerk, secretary, and treasurer. This church shall employ or call officers, as needed.

7.2 Pastor

7.2.1. Those who have been called and equipped by God to rule and teach in the church are identified as elders, pastors, or overseers. These three names designate one and the same office in a New Testament Church (Acts 20:17, 28; Eph. 4:11-12; Titus 1:5, 7).

7.2.1.1 For the purpose of this constitution elders and pastors shall be separate positions and while all Pastors will be elders, not all elders are pastors.

7.2.2. Anyone desiring the office of a Pastor must evidence to God's people the personal, domestic and ministerial qualifications set forth in the Scriptures (I Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9).

7.2.3. Because the authority of the Pastor of the church is human authority exercised in the house of God, it has both high prerogatives and important limitations.

7.2.3.1. It is divinely delegated authority. Thus, Pastors are answerable to God for the exercise of this authority (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17). They are, therefore, obligated to discharge all the duties specified in the Scriptures in such passages as Acts 20:17-35, 1 Peter 5:1-4 and Hebrews 13:17.

7.2.3.2. When Pastors exercise this authority by requiring obedience to their leadership, they must seek to gain the consciences of God's people through the ministry of the Word (Eph. 4:11; I Tim. 3:2; II Tim. 4:1-2; Heb. 13:17).

7.2.3.3 The authority of the Pastors does not include the right to make all decisions unilaterally. The Bible makes clear that decisions having to do with corrective discipline and the recognition of officers require the consent of the local church with a vote (Acts 6:2-6; 9:26; 1 Cor. 5:4-5, 13; 2 Cor 2:6). It is only fitting that other important matters such as the reception and exclusion of church members, the full support and involuntary removal of officers and major financial decisions be approved by the consent of the church.

7.2.3.4. The authority of the pastors is limited to the sphere of the local church. They may not require consequences for sin beyond those of church discipline, invade the spheres of other ordained human authorities (husbands, fathers, civil rulers and employers), or command God's people regarding matters not specified in Scripture (Matt. 22:21; Luke 12:13-14). They must, however, order the house of God by the application of His Word (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:3a; Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-6:9; I Cor. 7:25-28; 35-40).

7.2.3.5 The authority of pastors is conditioned by the fact that they are themselves members of the local church. While pastors are shepherds over the flock, they are also members of the flock. Therefore, each individual pastor is entitled to the same privileges, is obligated by the same responsibilities and is subject to the same standards as are all other members of the church. Thus, each individual pastor is both under the oversight of his fellow pastors and leaders and accountable to the church as a whole (Matt. 18:17; 23:9; 26:31; 2 Cor. 1 1:19-20; Gal. 2:11; 3 John 1,9-10).

7.2.3.6 The authority of every pastor is the same. Thus, every pastor has equal rule in the church. Though gifts possessed and functions performed will vary from pastor to pastor, this diversity must never undermine real parity among the pastors (Acts 20:28; Gal. 2:11; 1 Pet. 5:1-2; 1 Tim. 5:17).

7.2.3.7. Finally, the authority of the pastors is a very real authority. When it is Biblically exercised, God's people are required to submit to this authority (Heb. 13:17).

7.2.4. A crucial aspect of the duties of pastors is exercising leadership with regard to the meetings and worship of the church. The pastors shall appoint such meetings as they believe good for the spiritual health of the church and assure that they are conducted to the glory of God and according to the provisions of His Word.

7.2.5. While the New Testament clearly indicates that there may be pastors who are not financially supported by the church, the pastors who rule well, and especially those who labor in the Word and doctrine, will, when possible, be maintained in material necessities and disentangled from the cares of another vocation according to their gifts, the needs and capability of the church and the direction of Christ her Head (1 Tim. 5:17).

7.2.6 Pastor's Call: A pastor shall be chosen and called whenever a vacancy occurs. A pastor search committee shall be appointed by the elders of the church from those nominated by congregation, to seek out a suitable pastor and this committee's recommendation will serve as a nomination. The pastor search committee will recommend only one candidate at a time. The pastor's election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two-week notice shall be given to

the church members. An affirmative vote of three-fourths with a quorum of at least half of members in good standing is necessary for a pastoral candidate.

7.2.7 Pastor's Terms of Service: The chosen pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by either his request or that of the church. In either case, at least thirty days' notice shall be given unless otherwise mutually agreed. There shall be a written, mutual contract/agreement between the pastor and the church.

7.2.8 Pastors Dismissal: Pastors may be dismissed according to the following and guided by 1 Timothy 5:19-22.

7.2.8.1. Pastors may be removed if it is clear that they are acting in contradiction to Scripture.

7.2.8.2. The accusation must be brought to the current elders by two or three witnesses.

7.2.8.3. They will investigate the matter, seeking repentance and restoration. Any necessary discipline may also be imposed.

7.2.8.4. If necessary, the matter will be brought to the congregation by unanimous consent of the elders, minus the pastor under consideration. The pastor can be removed by a three fourths affirmative vote with a quorum of at least half of members in good standing.

7.3 Deacons

7.3.1 Deacon's Terms of Service: The church shall appoint as many deacons as is wise and prudent to meet the needs of the congregation. Deacons shall be elected until the term of office is terminated by either request of the individual or that of the church. Deacons shall serve their office, such that the majority of deacons will not cease their terms at the same time.

7.3.2 Deacon's Qualifications: A church deacon must meet the scriptural qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. A deacon shall demonstrate an exemplary Christian testimony in private, family, and public life, and be a committed Christian servant of the church and be a supporter and promoter of the church's people, faith, practice, programs, and ministries.

7.3.3 Deacon's Election: When a deacon vacancy occurs, the pastors and elders will enlist active qualified candidates whom they will recommend to the church. The duties, qualifications, and importance of the office of a deacon will be interpreted to the candidate. The leadership of the church will present the candidate to the church membership to be voted and appointed to the office of deacon.

7.3.4 Deacon's Confirmation: When the leadership of the church recommends the confirmation of deacons, the confirmation service shall be scheduled as led by the pastor. The confirmation of deacons shall be by and for the service of the local body of Vail Valley Baptist Church alone.

7.4 Elders

7.4.1 Elders Duties: The church is led by at least three but not more than seven elders. Elders serve as a body of counsel to assist the pastors concerning the progress and welfare of the church. They provide spiritual leadership through prayer and teaching the Bible. When necessary, they may delegate certain organizational and administrative responsibilities to other individuals and teams as they see fit.

7.4.2 No elder shall have any right, title, or interest in or to any property of the church. No elder shall be personally liable for the debts or obligations of the church of any nature whatsoever, nor shall any of the property of the elders be subject to the payment of the debts or obligations of the church.

7.4.3 Qualifications: Elders are male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements for eldership set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and personify the mission, vision, and values of the church.

7.4.4 Elder Selection: We do not choose elders, rather, we discover those whom God has gifted and called to serve in that capacity. The current elders will lead in the process of identifying, evaluating, and training potential elders. The final determination of selection or dismissal of an elder rests with the membership.

Elders are selected through the following process:

7.4.4.1. Potential elders are recognized as they serve, meet the biblical qualifications of and evidence Spirit-led ability to care for the spiritual growth of others and teach the Bible.

7.4.4.2. Candidates are invited to participate in the elder training process.

7.4.4.3. During this process, their character and abilities are examined.

7.4.4.4. Unanimity among the current elders is achieved regarding whether or not to nominate the candidate.

7.4.4.5. The elders recommend candidates to the membership as a nominee for eldership.

This nomination rests with the membership for three months. Any objecting to the nomination can address their concerns to the elders. If necessary, the elders may withdraw the nomination.

7.4.4.6. If no concerns are raised, a three fourths affirmative vote with a quorum of at least one quarter of members in good standing.

7.4.5 Elders Dismissal Elders may be dismissed according to the following and guided by 1 Timothy 5:19-22:

7.4.5.1. Elders may be removed if it is clear that they are acting in contradiction to Scripture.

7.4.5.2. The accusation must be brought to the current elders by two or three witnesses.

7.4.5.3. They will investigate the matter, seeking repentance and restoration. Any necessary discipline may also be imposed.

7.4.5.4. If necessary, the matter will be brought to the congregation by unanimous consent of the elders with exception of the elder in question. Then a three fourths affirmative vote by the body with a quorum of at least one quarter of members in good standing.

7.4.6 Elders shall be elected for a term of service of three years or until the term of office is terminated by either request of the individual or dismissal by the church. After a Elders's three-year term, the elder must not serve in the capacity of an elder for a minimum of one year unless if needed the church votes to extend the term of service for no more than one year at a time.

7.4.7 Elected elders shall elect the chairman of their body. In the absence of the pastors, the chairman of the elders shall serve as an advisory member to all departments and committees of the church.

7.4.8 Elders Confirmation: When the leadership of the church recommends the confirmation of elders, the confirmation service shall be scheduled as led by the pastor. The confirmation of elders shall be by and for the service of the local body of Vail Valley Baptist Church alone.

7.5 Directors

7.5.1 Director's Selection: Directors for the church shall be the Pastor, Chairman of the Elders, and Treasurer.

7.5.2 Director's Duties: Directors serve as a body to hold trust the property of the church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action. It shall be the function of the directors to sign any and all legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or lease of church property or any other legal documents requiring the signature of the directors for and on behalf of the church.

7.6 Committees

Through the cooperative efforts of the pastors, elders, the church body, all church committees shall be formed as needed. Each committee shall consist of at least a chairperson who is a member in good standing. The only permanently standing committee of this church shall be the finance committee.

7.7 Finance Committee

The finance committee shall have the responsibility of assuring that the adopted budget is adhered to. It shall recommend financial policies to the church and shall foster and promote programs of stewardship. In consultation with the church leadership for the new church year, it shall draw up and submit to the church an annual budget during the month of November for the next calendar year. This committee shall be responsible for an annual audit of the treasurer's books. A report of this audit shall be presented to the pastors and elders annually.

The finance committee shall have the number of members as is prudent and wise. The terms of service will be three years or until the term of office is terminated by request of the individual or that of the church. After a three-year term, the member must not serve on the finance committee for a minimum of one year, unless wisdom dictates otherwise and the church votes to extend the term of service. The election of the Finance Committee shall be brought forth by unanimous consent of the elders. If no concerns are raised, a three fourths affirmative vote with a quorum of at least one quarter of members in good standing.

Section 8. Church Ordinances

8.1 Believers' Baptism

Believers' baptism is the immersion in water of any person who has believed in Jesus Christ as personal savior, who has confessed said belief publicly, and who has indicated a commitment to follow Jesus Christ as Lord. The pastor, or whomever the church leadership shall authorize, may baptize, at a regular or special worship service, any person fulfilling the above requirements.

8.2 Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is the symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Body of Christ, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and anticipate his second coming. The pastor, or whomever the church leadership shall authorize, may administer the Lord's Supper as the Bible dictates.

Section 9: Church Meetings

9.1 Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday for the worship of God, for the preaching of God's Word, instruction, and evangelism. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor or designated person in the absence of the pastor.

9.2 Members' Meetings

A Member's Meeting and/or vote may be called by the pastor or by unanimous consent of the elders not serving as pastors. A two-week minimum notice must be given for the called business meeting.

A quorum of twenty five percent of members aged 18 and over in good standing is needed for all votes unless otherwise specified.

9.3 Meeting Etiquette

Meetings shall be conducted in a Christlike manner, to the glory of God.

9.4 Church Items Requiring Vote

The following items require vote by the church membership:

- Calling of pastors, worship leaders, and officers.
- Adoption of the annual budget
- Changes to line items of the budget of greater than \$500.00
- Additions to the budget
- Real property purchases.
- Accepting or the occurrence of indebtedness.
- Pastor's and paid officer's salaries and compensations.
- Adoption and/or amending the church constitution and by-laws.
- Amendment of the constitution

Section 10. Amendments

The church constitution and bylaws may be amended upon the condition that the proposed amendment has been made available to each member in writing, allowing minimum two weeks prior to voting on said amendment. A three fourths affirmative vote with a quorum of at least half of members in good standing shall be necessary to affect a constitution amendment.

Section 11. Dissolution

In the event of dissolution of this organization, all unencumbered properties and finances shall be given to the Catalina Baptist Association. All such decisions regarding this matter would be made by the majority vote of the remaining members of this corporation prior to final dissolution.

Section 12. Statement on Covenant of Marriage, Family, and the Sanctity of Life

We believe that all humans are created in the image of God and thus every person is of inestimable worth. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We believe that the term *marriage* has only one meaning: the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a biological man and a biological woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Vail Valley as the local Body of Christ, it is imperative that all members of VVBC, including persons employed by VVBC in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this statement on human flourishing. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking his mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and unloving behavior or attitudes that are directed toward any individual or groups are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of VVBC. As a congregation of covenant members, we reserve the right to operate according to the guiding principles of Scripture and these foundational documents.