

# Constitutional Bylaws of Burnaby Pacific Grace Church

*Last revised: March 28, 2023*

- 1 The name of the church is Burnaby Pacific Grace Church (the "Church").
- 2 Our Church is affiliated with and forms part of the B.C. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.
- 3 Doctrine: Our Church accepts in totality the confession of faith of the B.C. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.
- 4 Church Membership: Membership is granted to those baptized in this Church or accepted through membership transfer per procedures stated below:
  - 4.1 Application for baptism: Applicants must be 12 years of age or above, enlightened by the Holy Spirit to repent of their sins and to confess the Lord Jesus as Savior, accepting the faith of our Church, attending its services regularly, and having completed the baptismal class. Upon recommendation by the lead pastor and after gaining approval from the board of deacons through a testimony and an interview session on faith, the applicant may be accepted as members after the baptism.
  - 4.2 Application for membership transfer: Baptized believers of other evangelical Christian churches transferring due to reasons of moving or special circumstances necessary to leave their former churches and who have subsequently attended this Church regularly for at least three months, ready to accept the stated confession of faith and abide by the constitutional bylaws of this Church, shall, through the recommendations of the lead pastor and the approval of the board of deacons, be accepted as members.
- 5 Duties of Members
  - 5.1 To regularly study the Bible, pray, follow God's teachings, and attend Sunday services and other meetings.
  - 5.2 To seek to glorify God in their daily living and conducts.
  - 5.3 To witness for the Lord diligently and lead others to Christ.
  - 5.4 To understand the truth of stewardship, giving material offering, gifts, and time to God, sharing in responsibilities of the church and serving the Lord in one accord.
- 6 Review of Membership
  - 6.1 Officers or members of this Church who have acted or taught contrary to the teachings of God's word, the Church's Statement of Faith, or in the considered opinion of the board of deacons bring disgrace to God's Holy name or the reputation of this Church, and refuse to repent even after counseling, may, upon the approval of the board of deacons, be disciplined according to the severity of the issues in the following ways:
    - 6.1.1 Termination or suspension of duties
    - 6.1.2 Termination or suspension of participation in the Holy Communion
    - 6.1.3 Termination or suspension of membership
  - 6.2 Those whose participation in the Holy Communion or whose membership have been terminated may have their privileges reconsidered for restoration by the board of deacons if they truly repent and have demonstrated an obvious change of behavior.
  - 6.3 Members who are 18 years of age or above shall have the privilege to vote.
  - 6.4 Members who are 21 years of age or above shall have the privilege to be elected as an officer or deacon of the Church.
  - 6.5 Members who have not attended Sunday service for over six months without sufficient reasons shall have their privilege to vote and privilege to be elected as an officer or deacon of

the Church reviewed by the board of deacons, who may decide to terminate or suspend their privilege.

## 7 Organization and Election:

7.1 For the purpose of calculations using the number of active members in this section, the membership roster of the Church compiled for any deacon election shall be considered as an accurate count of active members.

### 7.2 Membership Meetings

7.2.1 An Annual membership meeting shall be called once a year by the chair of the board of deacons by ~~March 31~~ April 30 of each year, to approve the Church financial statements and ministry reports of the previous year, the annual budget of the current year, and any other items placed on the agenda by the board of deacons. If an annual budget is not approved before the commencement of an applicable year, the board of deacons shall operate on the budget approved by them for that year until the Annual membership meeting.

7.2.2 In case of special circumstances, the board of deacons may call for special membership meetings. A special membership meeting shall also be called within 28 days after the board of deacons receives a request signed by at least 15% of the number of active members setting forth the purpose of the meeting and after attempts, within the above stated 28 days, by the board of deacons to resolve the stated issues prove unsuccessful.

7.2.3 For every membership meeting, the Church must provide 14-day advance notice to each member together with the agenda for such meeting.

7.2.4 Membership meetings shall be conducted orderly (refer to: "Parliamentary Procedure: Standing Rules", adopted from the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches). Business must not be conducted at a membership meeting at a time when a quorum is not present. A quorum is 35% of the number of active members at the time the meeting was called.

7.2.5 Voting is done by show of hand or, if required by 10% of the members attending the meeting, by secret ballot. Voting by proxy is not permitted. All motions at the membership meeting must be passed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present in the meeting.

### 7.3 The board of deacons

7.3.1 The members of the board of deacons shall consist of each member of the pastoral staff and each of the deacons elected by the members at an annual meeting for the applicable term. The board of deacons shall select a chair (preferably from the elected deacons), and a vice-chair, a secretary, and a treasurer from the elected deacons.

7.3.2 An executive committee, whose members consist of the chair, the vice-chair, the secretary and a leading pastor of the board of deacons, shall be formed to deal with any matters arising and requiring to be dealt with between meetings of the board of

deacons. Decisions thus made by the executive committee are required to be subsequently submitted to the next meeting of the board of deacons for ratification.

- 7.3.3 Permanent Part time pastoral staff members (with normal average working hours of no less than 20 hours per week) shall also have the right to attend meetings of and vote at the board of deacons.
- 7.3.4 A minimum of eight board of deacon meetings shall be held each year. In case of special circumstances, the chair of the board of deacons may call for a deacon meeting. The summary of minutes of deacon meetings shall be made available to the members within three months of the meetings.
- 7.3.5 The board of deacons shall consist of at least 5 elected deacons. The number may be increased according to the needs of the Church, up to a maximum of 12 elected deacons. The term for each deacon is two years. A deacon may not serve for more than four consecutive years, after which he/she must retire for at least one year before being eligible to run for deacon election again. The preferred number of newly elected deacons would be no greater than half of the total number of deacons in the board. Each current board shall determine the number of deacons for the following year. The number of deacons to be elected shall be announced at the onset of the annual deacon election process. In case of special need, the board may invite deacons who have completed their terms to extend their service for a maximum of one further year.
- 7.3.6 If a deacon resigns from the board, the position for the balance of the term shall be filled by the candidate with the next highest vote in the preceding deacon election. If no such candidate exists, or that candidate is unwilling to assume the position, the position shall be filled by holding a deacon by-election following the same procedure as a regular deacon election. A deacon by-election shall take place within 3 months after the effective date of the resignation. In cases where the resignation occurs with less than 8 months to the end of the term, a deacon by-election is not required.
- 7.3.7 The members may remove a deacon before the end of his term in a membership meeting by a special resolution of the members in attendance with 75% majority. The position shall be filled as stated in 7.3.6.
- 7.3.8 An act or proceeding of the board of deacons is not invalid merely because there are less than the prescribed number of elected deacons in office.

#### 7.4 ~~Ministry departments:~~ **Ministry Committees**

~~Ministry departments are to be formed under the jurisdiction of the board of deacons. They shall plan and coordinate various ministries in accordance with the development directions and goals of the church. These departments may include: (1) Audio Visual department, (2) IT department, (3) Evangelism department, (4) Chinese Sunday School department, (5) Children department, (6) Caring department, (7) Music department, (8) House Affairs department, (9) Training department, (10) Worship department, (11) Fellowship department, and (12) English Ministry department. The number of departments may be adjusted according to the needs of the church. The department heads shall be appointed by the board of deacons in accordance to their gifts. Each department head shall serve a term of two years and preferably not serve in the same position for over two consecutive terms. The committee members under the~~

~~department heads shall be appointed by the department heads with the approval of the lead pastor.~~

Ministry Committees are to be formed under the jurisdiction of the board of deacons. They shall plan and coordinate various ministries in accordance with the development directions and goals of the church. These Ministries may include: (1) Chinese Worship, (2) Chinese Music, (3) Chinese Discipleship, (4) Chinese Evangelism, (5) Chinese Caring, (6) Chinese Fellowship, (7) English Worship, (8) English Discipleship, (9) English Fellowship, (10) English Community Time, (11) Children Worship, (12) Children Sunday School, (13) Kids Club, (14) Mission. The number of ministries may be adjusted according to the needs of the church. The ministry leaders shall be appointed by the board of deacons in accordance to their gifts. Each ministry leader shall serve a term of two years and preferably not serve in the same position for over two consecutive terms. The committee members under the ministry leaders shall be appointed by the ministry leaders with the approval of the lead pastors.

## 7.5 Deacon Nomination and Election:

- 7.5.1 Deacon nomination shall be carried out in accordance to Appendix 1: "Guidelines for Deacon Election Committee." The dates for deacon nomination and election shall be established and announced in the Church calendar at the beginning of the year.
- 7.5.2 Deacon Election Committee: The deacon election committee shall consist of at least 5 members: one or two pastoral staff, two departing members from the current board of deacons, and two members nominated in writing to the board of deacons from the general membership. Where there are less than two departing deacons, the outstanding positions may be filled by other deacons. In case where more than two members are nominated, the board of deacons shall work with all nominated members to agree on which two members shall be on the deacon election committee. The deacon election committee is responsible for evaluating prospective candidates for next year's board of deacons, in accordance to the deacon qualifications set forth in the Section 7.6.
- 7.5.3 Nomination Procedure: After the deacon election committee is formed, members of the Church have two weeks to submit written nominations without informing the nominees. Nominations must be each signed by two members not related by blood or marriage, along with a letter of recommendation from each nominating member, to the deacon election committee in accordance to the qualifications for deacon nominees. All members of the Church, including staff, current deacons, and members of the deacon election committee, have equal right to submit nominations. The deacon election committee, in its sole discretion, shall determine the final list of nominees.
- 7.5.4 Deacon Election: Deacon elections are done by ballot voting, with the nominees receiving the highest votes to be elected to fill the predetermined number of positions. In case the number of nominees is less than or equal to the number of deacons to be elected, the deacon election shall take the form of confidence vote for individual

nominees, in which a nominee is elected by receiving a minimum of 75% support from all valid ballots cast.

- 7.6 In order to qualify for nomination as a deacon, a person must be:
  - 7.6.1 A born again Christian, baptized for at least three years (1 Timothy 3:6), a member of this Church for at least three years, proven to be consistently attending various church meetings, and actively participating to serve in different Church ministries.
  - 7.6.2 Monogamous, irreproachable in heterosexual marital relationship and relationships with the opposite sex (1 Timothy 3:2).
  - 7.6.3 Of good reputation (1 Timothy 3:7; Acts 6:3).
    - 7.6.3.1 Living out a good personal life, not indulgent in bad habits or committing immoral or illegal acts (1 Timothy 3:3, 3:8-9)
    - 7.6.3.2 Living out a good family life, with the support, respect, and obedience of spouse and children, if applicable. (1 Timothy 3:4-5).
  - 7.6.4 Fulfilling one's responsibility in tithes and offerings, thus capable of being an example to others in the area of stewardship (Leviticus 27:30-33; Matthew 6:21).
  - 7.6.5 Spiritually mature (Galatians 5:22-23) and willing to work with others in serving the Lord (1 Corinthians 12:24-25).
  - 7.6.6 Reliable, available, faithful, and teachable, as well as demonstrating leadership in various church ministries, preferably having served in a leadership position such as deacon, department head, Sunday school teacher, or fellowship counsellor (1 Timothy 3:10; Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 25:14-30; 2 Timothy 2:2).

## 8 Ordinances:

- 8.1 **Baptism:** Baptism is a testimony made by Christians before God and humankind. It is to be followed by all believers, symbolizing the truth of being dead, buried, and resurrected with

- Christ. Baptism by immersion is practiced in this Church except in case of serious illness when baptism by sprinkling is conducted.
- 8.2 Holy Communion: Holy Communion is to commemorate Christ according to His command, conducted at least monthly for all born again, baptized Christians.
- 9 Wedding and Funeral Services: Members of this Church may request pastors of this Church to officiate wedding ceremonies or funeral services in accordance to the following stated guidelines:
- 9.1 The marriage partner must be a Christian and the union must be biblical, in the opinion of the pastor or the board of deacons.
- 9.2 Members who invite a pastor of this Church to officiate funerals must not allow other family members to construct altars or conduct ceremonies that resemble idol worship, chanting, occult practices, and rituals of other religions after the pastor has officiated a funeral service.
- 10 The membership delegates to the current board of deacons the authority to interpret these bylaws.
- 11 These bylaws may be amended as need arises by resolution of a two-thirds majority vote of the members present in the membership meeting.
- 12 Any other bylaws not stated in regards to administration, organization, authorities, and other aspects concerning the church should be referred to the constitution of the BC Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.
- 13 Documents of the Church shall be kept at the address of the Church unless the deacons resolve otherwise.
- 14 The English version of the Constitutional Bylaws is the official version and takes precedence over versions of other languages.

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Burnaby Pacific Grace Church (BPGC) Guidelines for Deacon Election Committee**

#### **1 Deacon Election Committee (DEC)**

##### **1.1 Qualifications for DEC Members**

DEC members shall meet the following requirements:

1. Active members of BPGC
2. Matured Christians
3. Familiar with the church leadership structure and operation

##### **1.2 Responsibilities of DEC**

The DEC shall be responsible for the following:

1. While the DEC is commissioned by the board of deacons, the DEC shall operate independently from the board of deacons and shall be accountable to the membership
2. To objectively evaluate all deacon nominees
3. After evaluation and prayer, to inform the board of deacons the suitable list of deacon nominees before publishing the nominee list
4. The term for the DEC members is 1 year

##### **1.3 Nomination Procedures for DEC Member Representatives**

The two member representatives for DEC shall be nominated according to the following procedures:

1. Announcement for nomination of member representatives for DEC is made.
2. The membership shall be given a minimum of 2 weeks to nominate the member representatives.
3. After obtaining consent from a potential nominee, two Church members shall submit their nomination in writing to the board of deacons.
4. Nomination will be reviewed according to the DEC member qualifications in Section 1.1.
5. Should there be no nomination, the Board of deacons shall appoint the member representatives.

## **2 Deacon Candidate Evaluation Process**

The deacon nomination and evaluation shall be carried out to, while in compliance with the requirements set out in Section 7.6 of the Church bylaws, encourage diversity in representation, promote ownership through participation, and to strengthen unity by collectively seeking the will of the Lord. The DEC therefore shall take the role of an administrator of the election process and take an inclusive position in evaluating all candidates nominated. The focus of the evaluation shall be to verify if the prescribed qualifications are met, rather than looking for the most suitable persons, which shall be the responsibility of the membership.

As such, the following outlines the details of the evaluation process:

1. After all nominations are received, the DEC shall evaluate these nominees on an individual basis according to the prescribed Qualifications for Deacons in Section 7.6.
2. The DEC can discuss individual nominees' cases, but the content of the discussion remains confidential.
3. If any DEC member(s) request(s) further investigation on individual nominees' cases, one pastoral staff representative and one other DEC member (preferably the one who raises the request) shall follow up to seek for clarification and better understanding, and report the results back to the DEC.
4. The decision to accept or reject a nomination should be made by a majority vote in the DEC.
5. The DEC is not required to disclose the list of nominees to the congregation, but individual church member may inquire if a particular individual is in the list.
6. As the DEC has adequate representation made up of pastoral staffs, deacon representatives, and member representatives, the decisions made by the DEC are final. The DEC does not need to disclose any reasons or details regarding the evaluation of nominees.