

# CORAM DEO BAPTIST CHURCH OF GRANDE PRAIRIE

## CONSTITUTION

### **Article 1**

#### **Name and Location**

The name of this non-profit organization is Coram Deo Baptist Church of Grande Prairie. This non-profit organization will be further referred to in the Bylaws as the “Coram Deo”. Coram Deo currently meets at 9101 104 Avenue, Grande Prairie, AB T8X 1H5. The Church shall have full power and authority to change the principle office and meeting place from one location to another.

### **Article 2**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of Coram Deo is to live in the presence of, under the authority of, and to the Glory of God.

We are a called out people committed to glorifying God (our vision) through worship and obedience to Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, by the preaching of His Word, the proclaiming of His name, the discipling of His people, and the spreading of His renown (our mission) for the joy of all nations (our goal). {Ephesians 1:3-14, Acts 2:42, Romans 12:1-2, Matt. 28:18-20, Isaiah 26:8, Psalm 67:1-2}

### **Article 3**

#### **Statement of Faith**

This church shall embrace the doctrinal statement of The Abstract of Principles written in 1858 by Dr. Basil Manly, Jr., one of the original professors of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a founder of our denomination.

We are also in agreement with the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* which is the current doctrinal statement used in association among Canadian National Baptists. A copy of this statement is available upon request.

### **Article 4**

#### **Affiliation**

Coram Deo is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denomination control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation and inter-dependence with other churches, our church voluntarily affiliates with the Canadian National Baptist Convention (CNBC) and Midwest Baptist Association.

### **Article 5**

#### **Government**

The government of Coram Deo is vested in its members. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of its life and organization. It recognizes the needs for mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. Coram Deo will cooperate with and mutually work with the Midwest Baptist Association and the CNBC.

## **Article 6**

### **Records and Reports**

Coram Deo will maintain the following records and reports:

1. Adequate and correct books and records of accounts (financial records).
2. Minutes of the proceedings of its congregational meetings and all other teams.
3. A record of its members, giving their names and addresses.
4. Contribution statements for contributors.
5. Reports of annual review of all church financial books, records, and proceedings.

## **Article 7**

### **Nonprofit Status and Dissolution**

Coram Deo is not organized for profit. The property of this church is irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes, and no part of the net income or assets of this organization shall ever incur to the benefit of an officer or member of the organization, or to the benefit of any private individual. In the event of dissolution of the church, all of its assets and property of every nature and description whatsoever shall be paid over and transferred at the direction of the Elders to the Midwest Baptist Association and to the CNBC.

## **Article 8**

### **Amendment**

This Constitution may be amended provided the proposed amendment shall have been presented in writing at a regular congregational meeting and then circulated to the membership. Amendments to this Constitution shall be two-thirds vote of members of Coram Deo who are qualified to vote and are present in the congregational meeting with a quorum to discuss and vote for this matter. Providing the amendment passes the first vote, a second vote will be held 30 days after. Should it pass a second reading the amendment will be accepted.

# CORAM DEO BAPTIST CHURCH OF GRANDE PRAIRIE

## BY-LAWS

### ARTICLE 1: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

#### Section A: Ways to request membership at Coram Deo

1. Membership in Coram Deo may be requested at a worship service and followed up by a meeting with a Pastor/Elder.
  2. By transfer of church letter from another Baptist church presented to a Pastor/Elder.
  3. By a statement of faith of their prior experience of conversion and scriptural baptism by immersion in another evangelical church of like faith and practice.
- Elders reserve the right to refuse membership for the same reasons laid out in Section IV (termination of membership).

#### Section B: Qualifications

1. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.
2. Baptism by immersion as a testimony of salvation.
3. Completion of membership class. Candidates for membership need to attend the Church Membership Class to learn and understand the privileges and responsibilities of members to God and the church.
4. Agreement with Coram Deo's statement of faith. It shall be the duty of church members to uphold the Statement of Faith, Constitution and Bylaws, and Covenant of Coram Deo.
5. Signing the church covenant. It is important that those who unite with us in membership realize this is a covenant relationship which commits each one of us to a relationship of mutual accountability.

#### Section C: Rights of Membership

Every member shall have the right to participate in the following matters:

1. The annual calendar and budget of Coram Deo.
2. The calling of a pastor and the affirmation of church leadership.
3. The eligibility for church leadership.
4. Participation in congregational meetings.
5. The disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of Coram Deo.
6. The merger or dissolution of Coram Deo.
7. The acquisition or selling of property.
8. Amendments to Coram Deo's Constitution or Bylaws.

#### Section D: Termination

Members shall be removed from church membership for the following reasons:

1. Death.
2. Transfer of membership to another church.
3. By personal request of the member.
4. Dismissal by the Elders according to the following conditions:
  - a. The member's life and conduct is not in accordance with the Statement of Faith

and/or members covenant in such a way that the member hinders the ministry influence of the church in the community.

b. Procedures for dismissal of a member shall be according to Matthew 18:15-17 or Titus 3:10-11.

5. Because of the covenant relationship we desire among our membership, a member that does not have any contact with Coram Deo for a period consisting of 3 or more months, without making known to the church leadership their intention to be away for an extended period, shall be removed from membership as the Elders deem appropriate.
6. The purpose of church discipline or dismissal is the ultimate restoration of the member to fellowship in the body.

### **Section E: Restoration of Members**

Members dismissed from Coram Deo shall be restored by the unanimous agreement of the Elders according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8.

### **Section F: Voting Limitations**

Each member is entitled to one vote. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

## **ARTICLE 2. Meetings of Members**

Congregational meetings of the members shall be held in the times, in the manner, and the purposes set forth below:

1. An annual meeting of the church shall be held prior to the beginning of the calendar year. The primary purpose of the meeting is to receive and adopt the annual report, the church calendar, and budget for the coming year.
2. Coram Deo may change the dates of the annual or other scheduled meetings by notifying the members at least 10 days in advance.
3. A special congregational meeting may be called at any time by the Pastor/Elders without advance notice.
4. Notification of members for congregational meetings may be given by any one of the following methods:
  - a. Distribution of written material to the congregation in attendance at a Sunday service.
  - b. Oral announcement to the congregation at a Sunday service.
  - c. By letter/email to members.
5. A quorum shall consist of those members present and voting.
6. Members shall be notified no less than 10 days prior to a scheduled meeting.

## **ARTICLE 3. Church Officers**

All church officers must be members of Coram Deo in good standing.

### **Section A: The Lead Pastor**

1. **Qualifications:** The qualifications for pastor shall be consistent with those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. His training, skills, and experiences are needed in this area of leadership.
2. **Responsibilities**
  - a. These generally fall into the following areas: Preaching, teaching, casting Godly vision, pastoral counseling, administration, planning, and guiding Coram Deo to grow and fulfill its purposes.

- b. To live a life of private and public integrity before his family and congregation. A committed Christian leader and partner of the Elders.
- c. He shall lead and equip Coram Deo and all its leaders in fulfilling its values and practices.
- d. He will provide direction, training, and will act as chairman of the Elder Body.
- e. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all on-going teams except the Pastor Search Team.
- f. He shall work with the Elders in securing pulpit supply in times of his absence.
- g. The pastor will be in scriptural mentoring relationships with the Elders and church leadership. He will also be encouraged to have a mentor in order to support and strengthen his ministry at Coram Deo.

### **3. Call**

- a. A Pastor shall be chosen and called whenever a vacancy occurs.
- b. A Pastor Search team shall be recommended by the Elders and affirmed by the church membership to seek out a suitable pastor.
- c. The Pastor Search Team will prayerfully consider and make a recommendation to the Elders. They will recommend only one candidate at a time. Once the Elders have affirmed the candidate, the Pastor Search Team along with the Elders will present the candidate to the congregation.
- d. Once the Elders and the congregation have affirmed the pastoral candidate, the candidate will be invited to meet with the church over a weekend of activities that will allow the church to get to know the potential pastor and ask questions.
- e. Following this, the congregation will be asked to pray.
- f. The pastor's election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least 10 days notice shall be given to the members.
- g. An affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those members present is necessary to extend a call to the pastoral candidate.

### **4. Terms of Service**

- a. The chosen pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by either his request after consultation with the Elder Body or the request of the church. Should Coram Deo terminate the relationship, the pastor will be compensated one months salary minimum for a pastor serving one year to two years and two months compensation maximum (unless otherwise agreed upon) for over two years served. Should the pastor terminate the relationship, a minimum two weeks notice will be given. If there should be biblical cause for his removal, the Elders will follow 1 Timothy 5:19–20. He may be terminated by a 75% vote by the congregation after a two-week notice by mail of the purpose and time of the vote. Afterward, the Elders will assume responsibilities for the pulpit.
- b. There shall be a written covenant agreement made between the pastor and the Elders outlining expectations and roles. This should also include salary, vacation time, and benefits.

### **Section B: Church Staff**

Coram Deo shall employ or call staff, as the Lord leads.

1. Decisions on staff members other than that of calling a pastor shall be made by the pastor and the Elders.

2. A special team may be assigned by the pastor and Elders to help gather suitable candidates.
3. A written job description and mutual covenant agreement will be prepared when the need for church staff is determined.

### **Section C: Elders**

The elders are entrusted with the governance of Coram Deo. Their oversight includes, but is not limited to, teaching, protecting, leading, disciplining, equipping and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members, as well as oversight of all ministry, operations, and finances of the church. The elders are also responsible for being obedient to the Scripture in the doctrine of the church, establishing the overall vision of the church.

#### **1. Definition of Lay Elders and Vocational Elders**

Lay elders are defined as those elders who are not in the employ of the church as a regular part-time or full-time staff member. Vocational elders are defined as those elders who are in the employ of the church as a regular part-time or full-time staff member. The criteria to establish if the elder is a regular part-time or full-time staff member is defined in the Church's Personnel Policies and Procedures.

Lay elders shall not receive compensation or salaries for their service. Vocational elders may receive reasonable compensation for fulfilling their vocational responsibilities as employees of the church. A vocational elder shall not vote on nor determine his own personal salary or benefits or designate his personal housing allowance.

The Elder Body will maintain a simple majority of lay elders. If for any reason the simple majority changes, then the elders will begin the vetting process to restore the required composition.

#### **2. The Elders at Coram Deo are to be recognized by the following process:**

- a. The Elders will call for a period of prayer by the body to discern God's men for service.
- b. Written nominations of qualified church members from the congregation will be given to the Elder Body stating the reasons why the nominee is qualified to serve as an Elder. The one making the nomination will need to bear in mind the Scriptural qualifications listed.
- c. An indication of interest and calling to serve as an Elder will be requested from the nominees.
- d. Each nominee and his wife will be screened: first, by completing a questionnaire related to the nominee's Scriptural qualifications and doctrine; second, by an interview with the Elder Body. A nominee may disqualify himself before or during the screening process. The Elders, after consultation and explanation with the nominee, may decide not to recommend him to the church.
- e. Approved nominees will be presented to the church body for a two-week waiting period. Anyone having a just reason of why the nominee is not scripturally qualified to serve will need to put this in writing and give it to the Elders. An Elder and the person concerned will then personally talk with the nominee concerning the questioned area. If the matter proves inconsequential, the nominee will remain on the Elder list. If the matter clearly warrants concern, the nominee will be asked to withdraw his name from further consideration until the matter is dealt with thoroughly.

f. The Elder nominee will begin a training process involving doctrine, leadership, personal discipline, and service. This process will involve times of instruction, interaction, projects, and assigned reading as means of preparing the nominee for service as an Elder.

g. After the training process, the congregation will be asked to affirm the nominees by ballot as God's men to serve the church as Elders. A nominee must receive at least a 75% affirmation by church members present and voting.

h. An ordination service for the ministry of Elder will initiate the Elder's ministry.

### **3. Responsibilities**

a. The Elder candidates will be recommended by the Elder body and voted into position with a three-quarters (3/4) majority vote by the members at the annual meetings and will serve for a term of four years to be reaffirmed annually with a one year break between terms.

b. Elders shall demonstrate an exemplary Christian testimony in private, family, and public life; a committed Christian leader and partner of the pastor; supporter and promoter of the church faith, values, practices, programs and ministries, and will display Christian maturity.

c. Elders serve as a team to assist the Pastoral Staff (as described in Section III) in spiritual ministry to the congregation.

d. They seek to resolve any fellowship problem of the church.

e. They work with the pastors to implement any church discipline when deemed necessary and to restore people to active membership when church discipline has taken place.

f. In the absence of the pastor, one of the Elders will serve as an advisory member to all organizations, departments, and teams.

g. The Elders assist the pastoral staff to set and implement spiritual vision among the church.

h. The chairman of the Elders will serve as moderator of the congregation; in his absence or at his request, another Elder may serve.

i. The Elders will be in scriptural mentoring relationships with those in Coram Deo Church. They will also be encouraged to have a mentor in order to support and strengthen their ministry at Coram Deo.

j. Non-vocational elders will serve four years and a mandatory one-year sabbatical must be taken before re-election.

### **4. Removal**

a. An Elder may be removed from office by resignation or grievance. Where a grievance exists against an Elder due to unrepentant unbiblical preaching or teaching or due to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder, the grievance may be brought before the Elder Council. After investigation and consideration of the grievance, and a determination that the grievance is true and substantial, the Elder may be removed from office by a vote of not less than two-thirds of the Elders in attendance at a meeting of the Elder Body.

b. Elders are self-disciplining bodies. Individual Elders may choose to take a leave from active service due to personal, family, or job-related situations that warrant such a leave. Reinstatement to active service is by mutual agreement between the individual and appropriate body.

## **Section D: Pastoral Staff**

### **1. Definition of Pastoral Staff**

Members of the Pastoral Staff will meet the qualifications established in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9. Pastoral Staff are not automatically part of the Elder Body, but may be selected as Elders upon nomination and approval of the congregation (the church will seek to maintain a larger ratio of non-paid staff Elders to paid staff Elders). Pastoral Staff will have a job description approved by the Elders and made available to the congregation. Pastoral Staff will serve under the immediate supervision of the Senior Pastor and the direct accountability of the Elder Body, who will also conduct, at least yearly, a performance review. Duties will be as stated in the appropriate job description. Pastoral Staff will give attention to personal walk with Christ and seek to build healthy relationships with the congregation. Pastoral Staff will maintain regular office hours, serve as ex-officio members of committees as approved by the Elders, engage in pastoral work with faithfulness, and attend the regular Elders' meetings.

### **2. Calling of Pastoral Staff**

The Elders will assume responsibility to call the church to prayer and invite nominations from the congregation for a pastoral staff search committee for the purpose of recommending Pastoral Staff members (full-time and part-time), as need warrants, to the congregation. The search committee will consist of four at-large members and two Elders, all nominated by the congregation, with one Elder appointed Chairman by the Elder body. The search committee will consider potential candidates from within the church and receive resumes for those outside the church. They will thoroughly investigate the candidate's qualifications, doctrine, education, ministry experience, competence for the position, and references. They will also seek opportunities to listen to the candidate's teaching and/or preaching, as warranted, and read published and non-published writings that demonstrate the candidate's doctrine, understanding of Scripture, and commitment to the local church. After satisfactory investigation of the candidate's suitability to serve at Coram Deo, the search committee will recommend the potential staff member to the Elders, who will also interview him. Upon the joint approval, the search committee and Elders will present him to the congregation on a designated Sunday to be heard and questioned. The Finance Committee and Elders will give the search committee parameters to negotiate the pastoral staff member's compensation package. The congregation will vote on the candidate the following Sunday morning with three-fourths approval required to issue the call to serve at Coram Deo.

### **3. Removal from Office**

Pastoral Staff, full-time or part-time, may resign from his ministry position by giving a two-week notice to the congregation. If there should be biblical cause for his removal, the Elders will follow 1 Timothy 5:19–20 as well as. He may be terminated by procedures for dismissal of a member according to Matthew 18:15-17 or Titus 3:10-11. Also a three-fourths vote by the congregation after a two-week notice by mail of the purpose and time of the vote shall be executed.

## **Section E: Deacons and Deaconesses**

### **1. Qualifications**

The qualifications for Deacons are stated in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. These qualifications are quite similar to the above detailed list of Elder's qualifications. Deacons will assist in this



work by carrying out the physical, ministry, and social needs of the church. The Deacons are not a policy-making or decision-making body. They are to be servants, leading the way in acts of mercy and care, visiting those in need, leading in benevolent concerns, and assisting the Elders in their labors. {In Romans 16:1, Phoebe is referred to as a deacon. If a woman closely lines up with the qualifications spelled out in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 with exception of the husband of one wife clause she may be considered for the office of deacon. She will not, however, exercise Spiritual authority over men (1 Timothy 2:11-15; Titus 2:3-5.)}

## **2. Deacon Selection**

Deacons must demonstrate the character qualities of 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and are nominated by the congregation for consideration as Deacon candidates. After screening by Elders, the Deacon candidates will be presented to the congregation for approval by 75% of the vote. They will be set apart by the church and affirmed as deacons in a service dedicated to that purpose. Their tenure requires ability to capably serve and maintain biblical standards of Christian character. They may be removed from office by resignation, by unanimous action of the Elders, or by three-fourths vote of the congregation. Elders and Deacons are self-disciplining bodies. Individual Elders and Deacons may choose to take a leave from active service due to personal, family, or job-related situations that warrant such a leave. Reinstatement to active service is by mutual agreement between the individual and appropriate body.

## **3. Designation.**

Deacons shall be those members of the Church, both men and women that serve in roles of service and leadership as designated by the Elders. The Elders will present Deacons to the Church for affirmation on at least an annual basis.

## **4. Responsibilities.**

In accordance with the meaning and practice of the New Testament Church, Deacons are to be leading servants in the Church. Deacons are members of the Church and responsible for supporting the Elders in the ministry of the Word. They care for the needs of the Church, community, and promote the unity of the Church (Acts 6:1-6). The duties of Deacons include, but are not limited to, administering aid to help the poor and needy in times of crisis and distress, assisting in the distribution of funds for the cross-cultural mission of the Church, overseeing the hospitality ministries and membership processes of the Church, assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel and overseeing the care and maintenance of the Church properties.

## **5. Removal**

a. A Deacon is subject to removal by a consensus of the Elders, but no less than a majority vote.

b. Individual Deacons may choose to take a leave from active service due to personal, family, or job-related situations that warrant such a leave. Reinstatement to active service is by mutual agreement between the individual and appropriate body.

## **Section F: Church Staff**

Coram Deo shall employ or call staff, as the Lord leads.

1. Decisions on staff members other than that of calling of pastoral staff shall be made by the pastors and the Elders.

2. A special team may be assigned by the Pastors and Elders to help gather suitable candidates.

3. A written job description and mutual covenant agreement will be prepared when the need for church staff is determined.

### **Section G: Secretary**

The secretary shall record or cause to be recorded in a minute book of the church minutes of all meetings of the elders and all votes taken at such meetings. The Secretary shall have charge of the official records and seal of the church, and shall perform such other duties as are incident to the office of secretary and as may be assigned by the elders under their supervision.

### **Section H: Treasurer**

The treasurer shall serve as the overseer of the financial operations of the church. Paid church staff members shall be accountable to the treasurer for the management of the financial aspects of the church. He shall perform such other duties and have other responsibilities as may be assigned to him from time to time by the elders.

### **Section I: Church Ministry Teams**

Coram Deo shall establish such teams as needed to carry out its purpose. All team members and new teams established must be approved by the Elders.

## **ARTICLE 4. Meetings**

### **Section A: Worship**

The regular meeting for worship shall be at such at times and places as the Elders may direct.

### **Section B: Business**

1. An annual business meeting shall take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday evening in August to elect elders, deacons, and other officers for the new fiscal year.
2. Special business meetings may be called as needed at the discretion of the Senior Pastor, Elder Body, or any five adult members of the church.
3. A three-fourths vote of all members present and voting shall be required for the election or discharge of a pastor, the authorizing of the sale or purchase of any church property and the amending of the Constitution and/or By-laws.
4. No business shall be transacted in the pastor's absence unless absolutely necessary or without his knowledge and consent.
5. In case such business should be transacted in the pastor's absence and without his knowledge and consent, he shall have the exclusive right to call the matter for reconsideration.
6. The pastor or his designee shall act as moderator of all business meetings of this church.

## **ARTICLE 5: Organization of Members for Ministry**

Members of this church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Article II of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek church sanction from the Council of Elders as an official ministry of Coram Deo. Such sanction shall be granted

provided that 1) the object, purpose, belief and conduct of the organization and its members is consistent with Article II of the Constitution, and 2) the primary officers of the organization are: members of the church, or other regular attenders of the church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Council of Elders. Sanction by the Council of Elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested as provided by the leadership of the church.

#### **ARTICLE 6. AMENDMENT**

These By-laws may be altered or amended in the following procedure.

1. A motion to alter or amend the By-laws must be presented in writing and published in the church bulletin two consecutive weeks prior to any business meeting.
2. Amendments to the Bylaws shall be two-thirds vote of members of Coram Deo who are qualified to vote and are present in the congregational meeting with a quorum to discuss and vote for this matter.