

Constitution and Bylaws

Blue Ridge Region of the Covenant Brethren Church

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Preamble

The Blue Ridge Region of the Covenant Brethren Church is a group of congregations located in a close geographic proximity to each other and having a common faith and purpose in Jesus Christ. The region enables the member congregations to do together what they cannot do separately and helps them to carry out their ministries.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – INCORPORATION

The Blue Ridge Region of the Covenant Brethren Church shall be incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia regarding religious non-profit corporations. Until such time as the region rents or purchases office space, the principal place of business shall be located in the St. Luke Covenant Brethren Church physically located at 3250 Back Road, Woodstock, VA 22664. The affairs of the corporation shall be managed by the Regional Executive Board. The chairman, Vice Chair, secretary, and financial officer of the Regional Executive Board and the Regional Executive Director if hired shall be the legal representatives of the corporation. One of the Regional Executive Board representatives shall sign all legal documents along with the Regional Executive Director (if hired).

ARTICLE II – BOUNDARIES

The Blue Ridge Region of the Covenant Brethren Church currently or will include congregations in the counties of Frederick, Shenandoah, Rockingham, Page, Clarke, and Augusta Counties. Adjacent areas may be added in the future as circumstances dictate.

ARTICLE III – Purpose of the Blue Ridge Region

The purposes of the region shall be 1) to encourage and strengthen local congregations in their respective ministry activities, and 2) to promote and coordinate the ministry activities of the Covenant Brethren Church the region. The Blue Ridge Region will affirm the Covenant Brethren Church's Statement of Faith in all practices and operations by member churches and her individual members.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBER CHURCHES

All congregations approved and accepted as Covenant Brethren Church congregations by the denominational Covenant Brethren Church Executive Board and residing within the geographic boundaries described in Article II shall be member churches of this region.

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ARTICLE V – REGIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

A - Purposes

The purposes of the Regional Executive Board (herein after referred to as the Board) are 1) to provide administrative oversight to the work of the region as authorized by the Annual Regional Meeting, 2) to provide for the daily operation of regional business, 3) to provide information and counsel to the Annual Regional Meeting, and 4) The board shall investigate any congregation which is reported to have failed to uphold the Statement of Faith or to adhere to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Covenant Brethren Church. Representatives from the Board shall meet with the pastor(s) and other leadership of the local congregation to discuss the report, determine its validity, and, if the report is determined to be valid, attempt to bring the congregation back into fellowship. If no resolution can be achieved, the Regional Executive Board shall refer the issue to the Covenant Brethren Church Executive Board for further action. Should any member of the Regional Executive Board be a member of the congregation in question, that individual shall not participate in the investigation nor shall that individual participate in any voting or other decision making by the Board concerning the congregation in question. The individual may represent the congregation to the Board but only in the capacity of a member of that local congregation.

B - Composition

The Board shall consist of a maximum of nine voting members who are elected through the soliciting of names of active members of the Covenant Brethren Churches who, regularly attending services in their local congregation. Any member who is recommended to serve on this board shall have attended their affiliated Covenant Brethren Congregation for a minimum of two (2) years prior to serving on the board and live in accordance with the Covenant Brethren Statement of Faith. The soliciting of names shall occur for not less than forty-five (45) days from all churches affiliated within the region and, a vote to appoint the new member will be taken by a congregational meeting of each church affiliated within the region. The name(s) of the individuals running for the board must be voted on in written closed ballot format with the winning candidate receiving at least a 2/3rds majority vote. Should there be a slate of two or more prospective board members and, no single nominee obtains a 2/3rds majority vote, the two candidates receiving the highest number of overall votes in the initial vote shall be placed on the ballot with votes being taken until, one of the two names listed obtains a 2/3rds majority vote. The Board shall select from within its membership a chair, a vice-chair, treasurer, and a secretary on an annual basis. This will be done at the first meeting of the Board following the conclusion of the Annual Regional Meeting. The Board chair will moderate all meetings of the Board and will vote only in the event of a tie. The Regional Executive Director and the Financial Officer (If one is appointed) shall serve as ex officio non-voting members of the Board. A quorum shall consist of five voting members of the board. There shall be no more than two board members from each respective congregation affiliated with the region.

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C - Responsibilities

The Board shall:

1. Meet on a quarterly basis and on other occasions as may be required to fulfill its duties
2. Have the authority to conduct and oversee the day-to-day operations and business of the region.
3. Have the authority to employ and to dismiss from employment for any reason all regional full and part-time staff
4. Provide general oversight and accountability to the Regional Ministry Teams outlined in the Bylaws, and to all other Regional Ministry Teams as may be established in the future
5. Assign one Board member per Regional Ministry Team to serve as an ex officio liaison between the Executive Board and the Regional Ministry Teams. The chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary will not be assigned to a Regional Ministry Team.
6. Receive financial reports and activity reports from Regional Ministry Teams
7. Make reports to the Annual Regional Meeting including a current treasurer's report and a proposed budget for the coming fiscal year.
8. Provide general direction and coordination to the overall ministry of the region
9. Approve the ballot for the Annual Regional Meeting
10. In the event that a member of the board is unable to complete their term, an unexpired term shall be filled through the same procedures as Article V, Section B notated above for the normal election of board members. The member voted in to complete the unexpired term shall be eligible to run for re-election one time and will then be required to take a one-year absence (break of service) from the board prior to again being eligible to hold a seat on the Regional Board.
11. The Board shall have the authority to determine the necessity of a virtual meeting and, may call such meetings with a minimum advance written notice given to all board members via email at least 72 hours prior to the meeting taking place. In the event there is a need for a special called meeting, any combination of three or more board members may call for a special meeting to discuss matters of concern. There shall be at least 72 hour's notice given to all board members prior to the special called meeting occurring.

ARTICLE VI – REGIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Board has the authority to employ a Regional Executive Director on a part time or full time basis as the needs of the region may dictate.

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A - Purposes

The purposes of the Regional Executive Director are:

1. To carry out the day-to-day administrative responsibilities assigned by the Board
2. To assist congregations in search of pastoral or other ministerial leadership as requested by the congregations
3. To assist pastors in search of ministry opportunities as requested by them
4. To carry out special assignments at the direction of the Board
5. To serve along with the Board chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary as an authorized signatory agent for the region

B - Relation to the Board

1. The Regional Executive Director is employed by the region at the discretion of the Board.
2. The Regional Executive Director shall serve as an ex officio non-voting member of the Board and shall make reports of all activities, offer suggestions and insights, and receive assignments from the Board.
3. The Regional Executive Director may be dismissed from discussion and business relating to his/her position, responsibilities, compensation, and performance of duties.

ARTICLE VII – ANNUAL REGIONAL MEETING

A - Purpose

The purposes of the Annual Regional Meeting are 1) to transact the business of the region, 2) to provide education, inspiration, and fellowship to energize the local church program, 3) to promote the denominational program, and 4) to care for the concerns of the region.

B - Meetings

The region shall convene annually. Special meetings may be called when agreed upon by a simple majority of the Board or when requested by a simple majority of the congregations within the region.

C - Delegate Body

All members of regional churches shall have the privilege of moving and discussing the business of the Annual Regional Meeting. Only official delegates of member churches shall have the right to vote.

Each local congregation shall chose delegates from within its CBC membership to be its representatives at the Annual Regional Meeting. Each church may have four delegates which shall consist of the pastor,

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the local board chair, and two other persons chosen by the local congregation. Any congregation whose membership exceeds 100 persons shall be entitled to one additional delegate chosen by the local congregation. No church will have more than five delegates to the Annual Regional Meeting.

In the event that a delegate is unable to attend the Annual Regional Meeting, the local church may choose an alternate and shall notify the Annual Regional Meeting Planning Team in writing.

D – Leadership Team of the Annual Regional Meeting

The Leadership Team of the Annual Regional Meeting shall be the Board Chairman, Vice Chairman, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and up to two board members selected by the membership of the board. The Leadership Team shall work with (Establish) the Annual Regional Meeting Planning Team to prepare all aspects of that meeting including but not limited to the dates, location, and duration of the meeting, the agenda, speakers, music, training or small group sessions and topics, etc.

The Board Chair shall preside at all business sessions of the Annual Regional Meeting. The Secretary shall make and retain an accurate record of the minutes of the Annual Regional Meeting, distribute copies of the same to the Board and to all member churches after the conclusion of the Annual Regional Meeting, and research the minutes on various questions as they arise in the business session.

The Treasurer or his/her designee shall attend all Annual Regional Meetings and provide a written, detailed, line-item budget for the upcoming year. Additionally, the Treasurer shall provide detailed, written, description of funds expended for the previous year. The treasurer shall be responsible for the payments of all debts after verification of each bill presented for payment.

E - Election of Regional Leadership

1 - Nominations

The Board Chairman shall receive nominations for all Board and Regional Team positions. The Board Chair, in cooperation with the Annual Regional Meeting Planning Team, shall review all nominations received, shall confirm that the persons being nominated are CBC members in good standing of their local congregation, shall confirm that the persons being nominated are willing to serve, and shall then prepare a ballot for the positions which shall be voted on at the next Annual Regional Meeting.

2 - Regional Executive Board Members

The term of office shall be for three years. Three CBC members shall be elected to the Board each year. Board members may serve two consecutive terms after which the member is ineligible to serve on the Board for one year. The length of the initial term for the members of the first Board (either one, two, or three years) will be determined by lot at the first meeting of the Board. This will enable an orderly rotation of Board members on a three year basis. Terms will coincide with the organization's fiscal year.

In the event that a board member is unable to fulfil the full term of office, the unexpired term shall be filled through the same procedures as Article V, Section B notated above for the normal election of board members. The member voted in to complete the unexpired term shall be eligible to run for re-

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election one time and will then be required to take a one-year absence (break of service) from the board prior to again being eligible to hold a seat on the Regional Board.

3 - Regional Team Members

The term of office shall be for three years. The number of members on each team may vary with each team having a minimum of three members and the maximum depending upon the needs of the team. Teams shall be appointed by the official board with members of each team voted on by the official board. Team members may be nominated from any regional board member, forwarded by any official church board within the region, or recommended by voting delegates at any Annual Regional Meeting. Vetting and qualifications of team members will occur in the same format as that of members serving on the regional board. Terms shall be arranged so that at least one team member is voted on each year. Team members may serve two consecutive terms after which the team member is ineligible to serve on the same team for one year. The length of the initial term for the members of each team (either one, two, or three years) will be determined by lot at the first meeting of each team.

This will enable an orderly rotation of team members on a three year basis. All terms will coincide with the organization's fiscal year.

In the event that a team member is unable to full the full term of office, the position will be filled by following the normal selection of team members. The individual selected shall be considered as the first term regardless of the term remaining of the unfinished term and, the individual completing the unfilled term shall be eligible to serve one additional term.

4 – Removal from Regional Leadership

A. Cause for Removal

Any individual in any position of regional leadership may be removed by action of the Regional Executive Board for:

1. Failure to support the Word of God and the Covenant Brethren Church Statement of Faith and Bylaws by preaching, teaching, or promoting false doctrine
2. Personal moral failure
3. Failure to fulfill the responsibilities of office (Bylaws Article 2 Statement 3)
4. No longer being a member in good standing of a local Covenant Brethren Church.

B. Process for Removal

Upon receiving a complaint against someone in a regional leadership position, representatives from the Board shall attempt to meet with the individual to determine the validity of the complaint. If the complaint is determined to be valid the Board shall work with the individual to reconcile the matter. If a

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reconciliation is not possible, the individual may be removed from regional leadership by a 3/4 vote of the members of the Board. Should the individual in question be a member of the Board, that individual shall not participate in the Board's final discussion and voting. If a Board member is a member of the same congregation as the individual in question, that Board member may recuse him or herself from any discussion and/or voting on this particular matter at his/her discretion.

ARTICLE VIII – DISSOLUTION OF THE REGION

Should it become necessary to dissolve the region, the Board then in office shall distribute the assets in the following manner. The Board shall divide all assets of the region equally among all of the regional congregations then in existence. No individual may benefit from the distribution of regional assets.

In the event that the Covenant Brethren Church denomination is no longer functioning at the time of dissolution of this region, the Board may choose to convey any assets of the region that were obtained via the National Covenant Brethren Church Denomination to any another 501c3 corporation whose work and goals as determined by the Board are in agreement with the work and goals of the region.

This dissolution clause pertains only to the assets held by the Blue Ridge Region of the Covenant Brethren Church and does not apply to any local congregation within the region. Local churches shall retain all of their own assets independently and will not be subject to penalty or fees should they decide to leave the Covenant Brethren Church Denomination.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution and to the Bylaws of this region may be ratified by a vote of the Annual Regional Meeting delegates which receives a 75% affirmative vote. (See Bylaws Article I)

Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Board in writing and shall be made available to the delegates a minimum of thirty (30) days in advance of the Annual Regional Meeting.

Article X – Partial Invalidity

If any provision of this Constitution and Bylaws or, the application thereof to any person or circumstance shall to any extent be held void, unenforceable, or invalid, then the remainder of these documents or the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held void, unenforceable, or invalid shall not be affected thereby and, each provision of this Constitution and Bylaws shall be valid and enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law.

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ARTICLE I – QUORUM AND VOTING

Annual Regional Meeting

The individual delegates from regional congregations shall comprise the voting delegate body at the Annual Regional Meeting. Delegates shall register prior to the beginning of the Annual Regional Meeting. All of the delegates who are present at the business session at the time of voting will constitute a quorum.

Delegates are deemed to be present at the meeting when they are physically present in the room where the business and voting are taking place. In the event the Board determines that circumstances require a virtual meeting, business may be conducted by video and audio connections which enable delegates to see, hear, and fully participate in the discussion and voting.

Absentee and proxy ballots for business items are not permitted.

In general, an item of business will require a simple majority vote for passage. Exceptions to the general rule shall include:

1. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws require a 75% affirmative
2. Any item of business which would place a significant financial obligation on the region such as the purchase or long term rental/lease of property, vehicles, or other capital investment require a 75% affirmative

ARTICLE II - QUALIFICATIONS FOR REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

When considering individuals to serve in a leadership position it is important to identify people who are:

1. Strongly supportive of the Word of God and the Covenant Brethren Church Statement of Faith and Bylaws
2. Mature Christians, not recent converts, whose own house is in order, and who have experience in the area of ministry to which they are being called and, have been active members in a Covenant Brethren Church located within the region for at least two years.
3. Willing to put sufficient time, effort, and energy into the ministry position to which they are being called

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4. Members in good standing of a local Covenant Brethren Church congregation in this region

ARTICLE III – REGIONAL TEAMS

The teams listed below shall assist the Board and Regional congregations in fulfilling their respective ministries. The primary duties and responsibilities are listed for each team. Additional duties and responsibilities which are directly related to a team's primary function may be added by the Board as the needs arise.

Each team shall have a minimum of three members and a maximum to be determined by the needs of the team. Teams serve as planners and organizers and may solicit help from the regional congregations in carrying out their ministries if such assistance is needed.

Annual Regional Meeting Planning Team

The purpose of this team is to provide basic planning and organization for the annual regional meeting. Members of this team will:

- be gifted with organizational and administrative skills
- prepare a ballot for the coming year to be presented to the Board
- work in cooperation with members of the Annual Regional Meeting Leadership Team (see Constitution Article VII, Section D) in preparing for the Annual Regional Meeting
- Develop/Coordinate with the Regional Board for the agenda of the Regional Meeting, they will disseminate items of business to be discussed at the Regional Meeting at least 30 days prior to the date of the scheduled Regional Meeting.

Church Planting and Revitalization Team

The purposes of this team are to promote the importance of planting new congregations throughout the region, and to provide prayer support, resources, and encouragement to congregations which are struggling to regain their vitality and vision.

- develop, promote, and oversee new church planting efforts
- identify or develop resources to assist pastors and congregations in regaining spiritual health, vitality, and vision
- promote evangelism, both personally and congregationally, and provide resources for evangelistic training for congregations

Disaster Relief Work Team

The purposes of this team are to raise awareness of the importance of disaster relief work among regional congregations, and to encourage congregational participation in that vital area of ministry and to share the gospel to those they minister. Members of this team will:

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- have a fervent desire for disaster relief work and a willingness to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty for the Lord
- develop and promote a regional disaster relief program working in conjunction with existing agencies such as Brethren Disaster Relief Ministries and other similar groups
- organize regional disaster relief teams as circumstances allow which may travel to areas where such work is needed

Ministry Growth and Spiritual Development Team

The purpose of this team is to emphasize the importance of lifelong learning and continual spiritual development for regional church leaders and congregations. Members of this team will:

- develop and provide training and spiritual growth opportunities for church leaders and workers such as Regional Bible Studies, Regional Bible Conferences, Regional Revival Meetings, Teacher Training/Development programs, VBS Workshops, Camp Ministry Training
- provide congregations with various resources and study helps for spiritual growth and development for all age groups

Ministerial Leadership Team

The purpose of this team is to provide regional accountability and encouragement for licensed and ordained ministers. This team consists of three ordained ministers and two laypersons who have strong leadership skills. The members of this team will:

- provide opportunities for regional ministers to meet regularly for encouragement, sharing of ministry experience, and mutual prayer
- provide opportunities for ministerial ethics training
- provide opportunities for ministers to obtain CEU credits and oversee compliance with CEU requirements by regional ministers
- work to strengthen positive relationships between ministers and congregations
- offer recommendations to the national Ministerial Leadership Commission concerning the renewal of credentials for ordained ministers and concerning the granting of credentials for new ministers
- seek reconciliation and resolution of issues between ministers or between ministers and their congregations, or, when necessary, seek input from or make recommendations to the national Ministerial Leadership Commission concerning unresolved issues
- encourage those interested in pursuing a ministry calling to apply to the national Ministerial Training Program

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Ministerial Training Team

The purpose of this team is to facilitate the identification and training of future ministerial leadership. This team will consist of five members: 3 ordained Covenant Brethren Church ministers and 2 lay leaders who are members of a CBC congregation. The members of this team will:

- have an interest in the training of ministers
- have a background in education, training, or a related field
- implement and maintain the National Covenant Brethren Church's Ministerial Training Program and manage the delivery of that program on the regional level
- work to develop CEU opportunities for current ministers
- select mentors for ministers -in-training
- promote training opportunities provided by the Brethren Bible Institute among regional congregations

Missions Team

The purposes of this team are to raise awareness of the importance of missions work among regional Congregations, and to encourage congregational participation in that vital area of ministry and to work in cooperation with the National Covenant Brethren Church Mission Committee. Members of this team will:

- have a fervent desire for taking the Gospel to all the world
- promote awareness of the vital task of evangelization beginning in the local community and extending around the world
- develop and promote an international mission support program including prayer support, financial support, and short or long-term mission trips, etc.
- encourage evangelistic work among local congregations and provide resources for evangelistic training

Prayer Team

The purpose of this team is to promote the importance and practice of prayer among regional congregations. Members of this team will:

- know how to touch the heart of God through prayer
- devote themselves to praying daily for the region
- develop and publish monthly prayer topics to be distributed through the Blue Ridge Region website, Facebook page, and other avenues of communication

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- be available to lead devotions and prayer at regional meetings

Publications Team

The purpose of this team is to prepare informational articles, announcements, and other public communication pieces which highlight the ministries of the region and regional congregations. Members of this team will:

- be gifted with the skills necessary to produce effective written communication
- work in cooperation with the region's webmaster or webhost to establish a social media presence
- prepare and distribute print media to regional congregations as necessary
- share publications with the National Covenant Brethren Church

Congregational Life/Focused Planning Team

The purposes of this team are to promote interaction among all regional congregations so that congregations are vitally connected to one another, and to provide organization and oversight to various regional ministries. Members of this team will:

- be gifted in the area of helping people and promoting fellowship among believers
- plan events which are effective in building healthy interaction between congregations
- develop, promote, and maintain a youth camping program
- develop and promote regional youth conferences and youth ministry opportunities
- develop and promote regional men's and women's fellowship programs
- develop and promote regional youth and children's ministries

Regional Polity and Policy Team

The purposes of this team are to serve as an information resource for questions of compliance with state and federal law regarding religious organizations, and to assist congregations in compliance with such laws. Members of this team will:

- have a legal or administrative policy background
- work with legal counsel to obtain non-profit corporate status for the region
- consult with appropriate legal counsel as needed to resolve questions relating to matters of corporate law, tax law, employment law, and all other legal matters
- make periodic recommendations to the Board concerning the need for a liability insurance policy and concerning any other legal matters

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- work to develop Regional Bylaws in concert with the National Covenant Brethren Church’s Bylaws and Statement of Faith and, will review/update these bylaws at intervals not greater than every five years.
- serve as the parliamentary advisory team for the Annual Regional Meeting

Stewardship Team

The purpose of this team is to provide for the effective and transparent administration of the region’s financial affairs. Members of this team will:

- have a background in finance
- develop the annual budget to be adopted at the Annual Regional Meeting
- monitor spending and work closely with the Financial Officer and the Regional Executive Director in that capacity
- oversee fundraising for the region
- assist regional congregations to become good and faithful stewards of God's resources
- inform congregational leaders of the financial needs of the region
- encourage congregations to support Regional initiatives

Other Teams

The Annual Regional Meeting and /or the Board may authorize additional teams as necessary to assist with the on-going work of the region.

Adoption

The signatures below attest that the Constitution and Bylaws of the Blue Ridge Region of the Covenant Brethren Church were adopted by a 2/3rds vote of each church’s members who attended each church’s called business meeting to discuss adoption of these Constitution and Bylaws on the dates listed below. Any Congregation that does not (fails to) provide feedback regarding this initial Constitution and Bylaws or, convene a called church business meeting within forty-five (45) days of being notified of this proposed document will be considered to have forfeited any right or recourse to provide changes to this initial document and, will have consented to abide by the guidelines offered therein.

Signatures of Officer:	Date Vote Taken	Vote Count
_____	_____	_____

Moderator of (Church 1)

Signatures of Officer:	Date Vote Taken	Vote Count
_____	_____	_____

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Moderator of (Church 2)

Signatures of Officer: Date Vote Taken Vote Count

Moderator of (Church 3)

Signatures of Officer: Date Vote Taken Vote Count

Moderator of (Church 4)

Signatures of Officer: Date Vote Taken Vote Count

Moderator of (Church 5)