



**CATALYST CHURCH**  
S A N D I E G O

# **Constitution and Bylaws**

January 21, 2024



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# Constitution

## Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution and bylaws to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the church body in an orderly manner. This constitution and bylaws will protect the rights and responsibilities of each church member and the freedom of action of this body.

## Definition

We are a Christian body of believers in Jesus Christ who affirm the authority of the Holy Bible as inspired, inerrant, and sufficient for life and godliness. We exist by God's grace to follow Jesus and glorify God by the power of the Holy Spirit, and we unite for this purpose.

## Doctrinal Statement

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the sole authority for faith and practice at Catalyst Church San Diego. This church affirms the doctrines and religious convictions of the *Baptist Faith & Message 2000* and practices ministry accordingly.<sup>1</sup>

## The Church Covenant

The church members commit to the following:

- We are faithful believers in Jesus Christ who follow his example and worship him as our resurrected Lord.
- We will meditate on the Scriptures regularly and apply them to our lives.
- We will pray to God often for our family, church, and world.
- We will love one another and participate in person at our worship services and community functions.
- We submit to the church's leadership, as they submit to Christ, and commit to learning and growing at our church.
- We will support the ministry of this church through our prayers, time, talents, and financial giving.
- We commit to being a witness of Christ in word and deed to the world around us.
- We agree with the church doctrines and bylaws and commit to helping the church carry out its mission and vision to share the good news of Jesus with the world.

## Mission Statement

We seek to glorify God by reaching people for God's family and leading them to grow as disciples of Jesus.

## Vision Statement

We want to see our community, city, and world changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> The Baptist Faith & Message 2000 is the statement of faith of the SBC: <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/>

# Bylaws

## Section One: Organization

### A. Name

The legal name of this corporation is **Paradise Hills Southern Baptist Church**, incorporated on October 14, 1956, in San Diego, California. As of November 1, 2023, this corporation is doing business as **Catalyst Church San Diego**. Hereafter, in these bylaws, this corporation shall be referred to as the "church."

### B. Affiliation

Our church is autonomous, and we maintain the right to govern our affairs independently. We are not under denominational or ecclesiastical authority. Recognizing that cooperation with like-minded churches is beneficial to advancing the work of God's kingdom in our world, we cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state, and local expressions.

### C. Federal and State Legalities

This church operates under California's Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law. We do not organize for the private gain of any individual. In compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of California, the Lead Pastor shall be the corporation's president and elect a corporate secretary and treasurer.

### D. Dedication of Assets

Upon dissolution of this corporation, its assets, remaining after payment or provision for payment of all debts and liabilities of this church, shall be distributed to the San Diego Southern Baptist Association (SDSBA), or if the SDSBA has dissolved, another approved Southern Baptist entity. No person shall have property rights or claims to the church's assets.

## Section Two: Membership

### A. Definition

The church members consist of baptized believers in Jesus Christ who affirm and commit to the church's doctrinal statement, covenant, and bylaws.

### B. Qualifications for Membership

Any person may request to be a church member by conferring with the church's pastoral leadership. A new church member must fulfill the following requirements:

- A personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior
- A public profession of faith through baptism by immersion either at this church or another evangelical church

- Affirm the church's doctrinal statement, covenant, and bylaws, and agree to practice church membership accordingly by signing a covenant document with the church.

### **C. Admission to Membership**

The pastors shall recommend applicants for church membership to the church board. The board members shall then vote on admission at a board meeting. The pastors shall inform the applicant of the vote result and introduce new church members at a worship service or called members' meeting.

### **D. Membership Rights**

Church members contribute to the spiritual health of the church community through their God-given gifts and submit to the church's leadership for spiritual growth and discipleship. As part of the church, members are accountable to one another and benefit from the oversight of discipleship and the fellowship of the church body.

Church members have voting rights at meetings and can serve in leadership positions in the church. Leadership positions are subject to scriptural and other qualifications specified by the church bylaws.

Upon recommendation from the pastors and deacons to the church, active church members shall vote for the following issues:

- The annual church budget
- The election of a pastor or deacon
- Long-term indebtedness of ten years or more
- The purchase, lease, or sale of property
- The dissolution of the church as a corporation
- Any other item of significant impact on the church as determined by the pastors and deacons

### **E. Termination of Membership**

Church membership shall end either by death, written or verbal request by a member to terminate their membership, or exclusion by action of this church according to the following provisions.

A church member may lose their membership upon evidence of actions that violate the church covenant and damage the church's witness, unity, or welfare. The pastors will take reasonable measures to resolve the issue as per Matthew 18:15–20. The pastors may determine to suspend a member's voting rights or eligibility for ministry positions while their membership is under review. After attempts for repentance and restoration have proven unsuccessful, the church shall notify the member regarding the termination of their membership.

## **Section Three: Church Officers**

### **A. Biblical Offices**

The Bible describes two church offices: elders and deacons (Acts 6:1–6; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Pet. 5:1–3). The biblical terms for elder, overseer, and pastor refer to the same office. Therefore, the church has only two offices: Pastors and deacons. While the Scriptures limit the pastoral office to men (1 Tim. 2:12–14, 3:2), deacons may be men or women (1 Tim. 3:8–13; Rom. 16:1).

Pastors are responsible for the spiritual oversight of the church, including its mission and evangelistic outreach, and lead the church through prayer and the ministry of God's Word. Deacons oversee service ministries and help in supporting the church members' needs.

The church shall have a board consisting of the pastors and deacons of the church. The board members will meet regularly to discuss church affairs. In this document, the "board members" refers to the church's officers, comprised of pastors and deacons.

### **B. Board Qualifications**

Board members shall be people of integrity who serve the church to fulfill its mission and represent the congregation well.

Pastors shall be above reproach, a husband who is faithful to his wife, self-controlled, sensible, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to substance abuse, not a bully but gentle, not quarrelsome, not greedy, managing their family well, not a recent convert, and having a good reputation with others (1 Tim. 3:1–7).

Deacons should be respectable, not hypocritical, not addicted to substances, not greedy, serving the church well, not slanderers, self-controlled, faithful to their spouse, and managing their family well (1 Tim. 3:8–13).

### **C. Pastors**

Pastors lead the church in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20). Their primary responsibility is to oversee as managers and caretakers of the church, providing spiritual guidance, love, encouragement, guidance, counsel, and teaching (1 Tim. 3:5).

A plurality of elders (pastors) follows a biblical pattern outlined in Acts 14:23, 20:17, and Titus 1:5. Therefore, the church should have more than one pastor to fulfill its biblical mandate.

The church will have one pastor overseeing as a Lead Pastor, who serves as an equal among pastors. The Lead Pastor will serve as the corporation's Chief Executive Officer, having administrative authority and oversight of the church's activities. These duties include hiring staff and preparing an annual church budget to be approved by the board members at a board meeting and church members at the annual meeting.



Pastors may serve the church indefinitely until their resignation, retirement, or the church's dismissal. Board members shall determine a pastor's hours, salary, benefits, and compensation through a written contract. Board members have the authority to terminate a pastor and shall notify the church with an explanation at a specially called members' meeting.

It is beneficial and recommended for pastors to have a theological education from an accredited seminary. If married, their marriage should be healthy. Their character should be above reproach as outlined in Scripture (Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:3).

Upon a vacancy in a pastoral office, the board members shall determine a recommendation to the church for a candidate. They may recommend only one candidate at a time to the church. After the board members recommend a candidate to the church, the church members will vote. The nomination of a candidate to the pastor position shall require three-quarters of those present to pass.

## **D. Deacons**

Deacons help pastors serve and care for the congregation and protect the unity of the church body. A deacon shall be an active church member and serve as a part of the board members.

Deacons shall be of good character and serve as an example to the church (1 Tim. 3:8-13). While deacons may lead in small group settings, they do not serve the church in a preaching capacity.

The pastors shall determine the number of deacons needed to serve the church and present candidate(s) to the church members at a worship service or in a members' meeting. The church members shall elect a new deacon by a three-quarters vote.

Deacons are not compensated for their position and serve the church as volunteers. A deacon shall hold no authority not vested in them by these bylaws.

## **E. Removal of Board Members**

A board member may be replaced or removed at any time deemed necessary by the board. The church board shall not comprise a majority group of members related by blood, business, or marriage. The board shall adopt a Conflict of Interest Policy to prevent voting by disqualified individuals, as defined in IRC Section 4958(f)(1).

## **Section Four: Church Governance**

### **A. Elder-Led Governance**

The head of the church is Jesus Christ, and the church exists under his leadership and guidance. The Lord established the church and provided leadership for it. The Bible describes a pattern of leadership as a plurality of elders for the church body (Acts 14:23, 20:17, Titus 1:5). Deacons serve the church in providing care for the congregation, and the congregation has the final vote in church matters through their vote in members' meetings. The church members give authority to church officers to lead the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and according to God's Word.

### **B. Annual Members' Meeting**

The church members shall meet annually in January or at another time as the board determines. The pastors shall notify the church of the annual meeting in writing and verbally through church announcements. The meeting will include a member vote on the annual budget and other church items as needed.

### **C. Specially-Called Members' Meetings**

The pastors or deacons may announce a specially-called members' meeting to address a matter of church importance as determined by the board members.

## **Section Five: Fundamental Matters**

### **A. Biblical Foundation**

This church affirms the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and the basis of our policies (Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16). This church is a body of believers, each of whom is equal in rank and privilege (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). This church's body of believers is committed to teaching sound doctrine and forming a healthy church.

### **B. Marriage and Human Sexuality**

Marriage is a biblical institution established by God, as described in Scripture. This church recognizes that marriage is the union of a man and a woman in a covenant for life. Consequently, this church, its pastors, staff, and volunteers support marriages between a man and a woman. The church will not use its property and resources for purposes related to same-sex marriages or unions (Gen. 1:27, 2:22–24; Eph. 5:22–33).

The Bible teaches that legitimate sexual relationships are exercised only within marriage between a man and a woman in a covenant marriage relationship for life. Therefore, this church does not participate in any form of sexual immorality described in the Word of God, including any sexual orientation that is not in line with the Word of God (Rom. 1:18–32; Gen. 2:24; 1 Pet. 3:1–7).

## **C. Mutual Interest Clause**

The behavior of any person in communion with this church is in the common interest (Gal. 6:1). This church requires that each leader and board member adhere to a lifestyle consistent with the doctrines of this church as taught in the Holy Bible (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10). Therefore, this church reserves the right to refuse services, including, but not limited to, any use of church property, to any person who is not submitting to the church's doctrinal beliefs.

## **D. Prohibited Activities**

This church will not engage in activities that violate its written doctrines and will not condone, promote, or allow the use of any assets toward activities that violate its written doctrines or go against God's Word.

## **E. Congregation Privacy**

The church congregation has the right to privacy as follows:

1. The church will keep all records about politics, doctrine, and congregant information private.
2. The church will not release any record that could compromise information about the status of a congregant.
3. The church will not deliver any application to any government authority without receiving due process and a valid subpoena from the appropriate government agency.
4. The church shall only release records to an outside agency, person, or entity if it has received due process and a certified subpoena has been personally delivered. This requirement includes the IRS, except under the provisions of Section 7611, which shall be limited only to information deemed relevant to the inquiry. At all times, the IRS must comply with all of the provisions of Section 7611.
5. Any church computer with internet access must install and maintain filtering software to reduce the potential for access or exposure to harmful content.
6. The Bible teaches Christians to carefully guard any personal and private information others reveal (Matt. 7:12).
7. While the church will make every effort to protect confidentiality, there are times when it is appropriate to disclose certain information to others. In particular, the church may reveal confidential information under the following circumstances:
  - a. When there is uncertainty about how to help a person with a particular problem, and there is a need to seek someone's advice in fellowship with this church, or if the person attends another church, their pastor at that church (Prov. 11:14, 13:10, 15:22, 19:20; Matt. 18:15–17).
  - b. When the person who provided the information, or another person, is in imminent danger of serious harm to themselves or others unless someone intervenes (Prov. 24:11-12).
  - c. When a person refuses to repent of their sin and the church institutes disciplinary procedures (Matt. 18:15–20) or seeks the help of individuals or agencies outside the church as necessary.

- d. When required by law to report a suspected abuse of a child, spouse, church leader, disabled, or elderly adult.

Scripture states that one may share confidential information with others after a one-on-one resolution is unattainable. After this, one may share information with a small group within the church for resolution or further action (Matt. 18:15-17).

No one will disclose confidential information to anyone outside of this church without a pastor's approval or the consent of the person who initially shared the information. The board may approve such disclosure only when all internal efforts to resolve a problem have been exhausted (1 Cor. 6:1-8), and the church cannot satisfactorily resolve the issue without the help of individuals or agencies outside of this church (Rom. 13:1-5). This limitation includes but is not limited to testifying in a court of law and reporting abuse.

## **F. Church Safety**

Our church commits to providing a safe environment for children who attend or participate in church-sanctioned activities and programs wherever they may be.

To ensure the integrity, safety, and reputation of volunteers and members, the church will maintain policies and procedures for child abuse and prevention. The policies will establish and describe the church's guidelines and procedures for the prevention of the abuse and sexual exploitation of children.

Our church is committed to:

1. Provide a safe environment for children/youth in the care of the church and protect them from harm (physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect).
2. Protect volunteers and employees in the church's child/youth programs from false allegations.
3. Provide a zero-tolerance policy for abuse or neglect. The church will not tolerate any abuse of children/youth under the supervision of volunteers or employees. Every staff member and volunteer is responsible for acting in the best interest of all children and youth in every program.
4. Ensure that, as a faith community, the church fulfills its obligations to safeguard the interests of the children in our care.
5. Ensure the integrity, safety, and reputation of all who represent our church in some capacity.

## **G. Ministerial Ordination**

This church complies with the Word of God in its process of ministerial ordination. This process will take place after much consideration and prayer and on the recommendation of the church leadership. The minister's ordination may occur if, in the majority vote of the board, the candidate gives evidence of having been called by God for ministerial service and has met the ordination requirements established in the church policies.

A Lead Pastor will submit the request for ordination to the board and request permission to convene an ordination review team to be in charge of candidate questioning and to ensure that it follows proper church procedure. The church should not be too quick to ordain an individual. The ministerial candidate must have appropriate biblical qualifications before being considered for ordination. The church will present the newly ordained minister with a certificate of ordination, which the minister may use for official purposes.

## **H. Indemnification**

Subject to the provisions below, this church will indemnify any official or former official and leader of this church against claims, liabilities, expenses, and costs necessarily incurred in connection with the defense, commitment, or settlement of any action, lawsuit, or proceeding, civil or criminal, in which said person becomes a party by being or having been an official or leader of the church, to the extent that party has not received compensation, indemnified or reimbursed by insurance, provided that the board is satisfied that:

1. The officer or leader of the Church Board acted in good faith.
2. The church officer or leader reasonably believed that his conduct was in the best interest of this church.
3. In the case of any criminal proceeding, the church official or leader had no reasonable reason to believe that his conduct was illegal.

This church cannot indemnify a church official or leader in connection with a proceeding initiated against him by or under this church, in which he was held liable to this church or where the official or leader of the church is accused of receiving improper personal benefit and is held responsible on that basis.

## **I. Amendments**


A board member may review these bylaws periodically to determine the necessity or appropriateness of the amendments herein. A board member will present any proposed amendments to the church board at a called meeting. These bylaws may be amended or revoked, or new bylaws adopted, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the board present at a duly convened and held board meeting.

## **J. Handbooks**

The church will maintain handbooks that guide ministries, meetings, and events. These handbooks may include policies and procedures, employment practices, and other ministry-specific guidelines. The pastors oversee any additions, revisions, or deletions to these handbooks. Pastors may update handbooks as needed.

I, the undersigned, certify that I am the acting and currently elected Secretary of Catalyst Church San Diego, and the above bylaws, consisting of 14 pages, are the bylaws of this church now in effect.

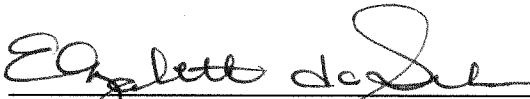
Executed on **January 21, 2024**, in San Diego, California.



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Secretary of the Church

## Board Members




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Beth Da Silva, Deaconess



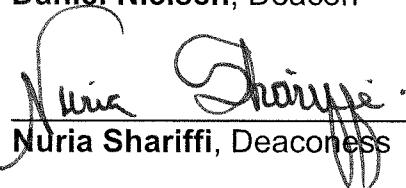
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Christopher Collins, Deacon, Chief Financial Officer




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Daniel Nielsen, Deacon



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Nuria Shariffi, Deaconess



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Jason Soto, Lead Pastor, Chief Executive Officer



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Johannes Cardenas, Associate Pastor, Secretary