

CONSTITUTION (2017 Version)
LOS ALTOS GRACE BRETHERN CHURCH
Long Beach, California

ARTICLE ONE - NAME

The name by which this church will be called is the Los Altos Grace Brethren Church (LAGBC).

ARTICLE TWO - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The three principal reasons for LAGBC's existence are to: (1) exalt the Lord (Romans 15:5-6; 1 Corinthians 10:31); (2) edify the saints (Ephesians 4:11-16); and (3) evangelize the world (Matthew 28:19-20).

ARTICLE THREE - STATEMENT OF FAITH

LAGBC will embrace, preach and defend the following beliefs:

1. THE BIBLE: the Word of God, the sixty-six Books of the Old and New Testaments, verbally inspired in all parts, and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).
2. THE ONE TRUE GOD: existing eternally as three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22; Matthew 29:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).
3. THE HEAVENLY FATHER: creator of all mankind (Acts 17:29), the author of our salvation before the world began (Ephesians 1:3-6), the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:17) and, in a very special way, the Father of all who believe in Christ (Galatians 3:26).
4. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: His pre-existence and deity (John 1:1-3), incarnation by virgin birth (John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-23), sinless life (Hebrews 4:15), substitutionary death (2 Corinthians 5:21), bodily resurrection (Luke 24:36-43), ascension into heaven and present ministry (Hebrews 4:14-16), and coming again (Acts 1:11).
5. THE HOLY SPIRIT: His personality (John 16:7-15), deity (Acts 5:3-4), and His work in each believer; baptism and indwelling at the moment of regeneration (1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9); and filling (Ephesians 5:18) to empower for Christian life and service (Ephesians 3:16; Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:22-23).
6. MAN: his direct creation in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28), his subsequent fall into sin resulting in spiritual death (Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 5:12), and the necessity of the new birth for his salvation (John 3:3-5).
7. SALVATION: a complete and eternal salvation by God's grace alone, received as the gift of God through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

8. THE CHURCH: one true Church, the body and bride of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-23), composed of all true believers of the present age (1 Corinthians 12:12-13); and the organization of its members in local churches for worship, for edification of believers, and for world-wide gospel witness, each local church being autonomous but cooperating in fellowship and work (Ephesians 4:11-16).
9. CHRISTIAN LIFE: a life of righteousness, good works and separation unto God from the evil ways of the world (Romans 12:1-2), manifested by speaking the truth (James 5:12), maintaining the sanctity of the home (Ephesians 5:22-6:4), settling differences between Christians in accordance with the Word of God (1 Corinthians 6:1-8), not engaging in carnal strife but showing a Christ-like attitude toward all men (Romans 12:17-21), exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), and maintaining a life of prayer (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6), including the privilege, when sick, of calling for the Elders of the church to pray and to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:13-18).
10. ORDINANCES: the Christian should observe the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, which are (1) baptism of believers by triune immersion (Matthew 28:19) and (2) the threefold communion service, consisting of the washing of the saints' feet (John 13:1-17), the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20-22, 33-34; Jude 1:12), and communion of bread and the cup (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
11. SATAN: his existence and personality as the great adversary of God and His people (Revelation 12:1-10), his judgment (John 12:31), and final doom (Revelation 20:10).
12. SECOND COMING: the personal, visible, and imminent return of Christ to remove His church from the earth (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) before the tribulation (1 Thessalonians 1:10; Revelation 3:10), and afterward to descend with the Church to establish His millennial kingdom upon the earth (Revelation 19:11-20:6).
13. FUTURE LIFE: the conscious existence of the dead (Philippians 1:21-23; Luke 16:19-31), the resurrection of the body (John 5:28-29), the judgment and reward of believers (Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10), the judgment and condemnation of unbelievers (Revelations 20:11-15), the eternal life of the saved (John 3:16), and the eternal punishment of the lost (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:15).

ARTICLE FOUR - CHARTER

Section A. - Authority

1. The primary authority by which LAGBC exists is derived from the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18), the true Head of His Church (Ephesians 4:15). As such, we are an autonomous fellowship of Christians in submission to Christ through the teaching of God's inerrant Word.
2. Of our own accord, LAGBC is a member in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches. We therefore recognize and sustain the obligations of mutual consent and cooperation

common among the churches of this fellowship.

3. We are incorporated as a nonprofit organization formed for spiritual, charitable and educational purposes in accordance with the laws of the State of California.

Section B. - Property

1. The title of the property of LAGBC will be vested in its current membership.
2. In the event of dissolution, all property and assets owned by LAGBC will become the property of Encompass World Partners.

ARTICLE FIVE - MEMBERSHIP

Section A. - Qualifications

Membership is available to those who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior, were baptized subsequent to salvation are in accord with the provisions of this constitution, who willingly commit themselves to the well-being of the LAGBC family, and have been accepted by the Community of Elders.

Section B. - General Duties

Members are expected to live a holy and faithful Christian life before God by striving to know and do His will. Furthermore, each member will participate in the LAGBC family by regular attendance at services, consistent financial support, fervent prayer, the use of time, talents and spiritual gifts for the work of ministry, submission to LAGBC'S leadership (including discipline, if needed) and the formation of godly relationships for the purpose of loving one another.

Section C. - LAGBC Privileges & Responsibilities

Each LAGBC member who is eighteen years or older has the privilege and responsibility to vote, pursuant to Article Six, Section B, on matters related to the:

1. Nomination and approval of Elders.
2. Approval of all major budgetary items (i.e., annual budget, major building projects, cumulative purchases by the Community of Elders for non-budgeted items totaling more than 10% of the annual budget).
3. Approval of all constitutional changes.
4. Any member who is dissatisfied with any aspect of LAGBC life is to present his concern, in writing, to the Community of Elders for its attention. The Community of Elders may then choose to respond in writing or in person to that member.

Section D. - Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated as the result of:

1. A written request by the member to the Community of Elders for membership termination.
2. A prolonged absence. In such a situation, the Community of Elders will make a diligent effort to contact the absent member for explanation. On the basis of said explanation, it will be the sole responsibility of the Community of Elders to:
 - a. Maintain membership privileges.
 - b. Extend associate membership privileges.
 - c. Revoke membership privileges.
3. Discipline for holding heretical (i.e., non-Biblical) doctrines, maintaining a lifestyle inconsistent with Biblical teaching, or repeatedly disrupting the peace and/or unity of the LAGBC family (Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1). All such discipline will be conducted by and is at the sole discretion of the Community of Elders.

Section F - Associate Membership

Associate membership is available to those who wish to maintain membership in a Grace Brethren Church, but are unable to do so due to extenuating circumstances. Associate members will not have voting privileges, nor will they be counted as "members" in statistical reports to district or national organizations. Associate members may have their status "upgraded" to membership status, provided they can meet membership requirements.

This is a special category designed for missionaries, students away at school, special family situations, shut-ins, etc., and is not intended as a "catch-all" category for non-attenders.

ARTICLE SIX - GOVERNMENT

Section A. – Community of Elders

Oversight for all affairs, administration and spiritual discipline of LAGBC will be vested in the Community of Elders. The following directions apply to its oversight:

1. Nomination and Recognition of Elders

God calls and ordains men to lead His people. It is the responsibility of LAGBC to recognize the men God has called to be its leaders as Elders. In order to fulfill this responsibility:

- a. Any member may nominate men to be recognized as Elders according to the character qualifications put forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. All nominations will be in writing and submitted to the Community of Elders.

- b. The Community of Elders will prayerfully consider all nominees and select candidates to be interviewed. The Community of Elders will then conduct a careful and confidential interview with the selected candidates.
- c. The Community of Elders will agree on those candidates it believes to be both qualified and called by God to serve in the role of elder.
- d. The Candidates on whom the Community of Elders agree and who believe they are called by God to serve in this capacity will be recommended to the congregation for recognition.
- d. A recognition form asking the question: "Has this man been called of God to lead His people?" will be presented to a meeting of the members of the congregation for their approval on each candidate individually. Each candidate must be approved by 75% of those members voting in order to be recognized as a member of the Community of Elders.

2. Term of Service

All appointments as Elder will be until:

- a. The Elder resigns
- b. The Elder leaves LAGBC; or
- c. The Elder is removed from service pursuant to Article Six, Section A, Paragraph 4.

3. Corporate Officers

The Community of Elders will select corporate officers from the LAGBC membership.

4. Removal of Elders

Any Elder or pastor may be removed from office upon recommendation by the Community of Elders and a simple majority vote of the congregation.

5. Meetings of the Community of Elders

- a. Frequency: The Community of Elders will meet as needed to conduct LAGBC business.
- b. Chairman: The Community of Elders will select an elder to serve as Chairman.
- c. Secretary: The Chairman will appoint a Secretary to keep minutes of official LAGBC proceedings.

6. Decisions of Leadership

- a. Individually: Each Elder will be responsible for decisions made in ministries within his sphere of oversight. Decisions involving money may be made, provided they are budgeted items. Non-budgeted items of consequence should be brought to the Community of Elders for approval. An Elder may always appeal to the Community of Elders for help in a decision and, in turn, the Community of Elders retains the authority to overturn an individual Elder's decision.
- b. Corporately: The Community of Elders will strive for unanimity in the decision-making process. This will require, on the part of all Elders, a listening ear, a tender heart, a flexible spirit and a biblical mindset. In times of indecision or disagreement, the Elders are to strive for unity, pray, and seek more wisdom. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached on a matter, a majority vote of 75% of the Community of Elders will be necessary to approve an item of business. A quorum of 60% of the Elders will be necessary to conduct meetings of the Community of Elders. No more than a cumulative total of 10% of the annual budget may be spent by the Community of Elders for non-budgeted items without the approval of LAGBC members pursuant to the procedure described in Article 6, Section B.

7. Responsibilities of the Community of Elders

- a. Generally:
 - (1) Serve as examples of godliness, 1 Peter 5:3.
 - (2) Administer church affairs well, 1 Timothy 5:17a.
 - (3) Shepherd (pastor) the flock, Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2.
 - (4) Equip the saints for ministry, Ephesians 4:11-13.
 - (5) Teach God's Word, 1 Timothy 5:17b; 2 Timothy 4:1-2.
 - (6) Pray for the ministries of the church, Acts 6:4.
- b. Specifically:
 - (1) Church Administration. The Community of Elders is responsible for the overall direction and administration of LAGBC.
 - (2) Church Commissions. The Community of Elders may form (by appointment or election) service commissions covering any area of LAGBC life and ministry it deems necessary. Each commission may be made up of LAGBC members and/or faithful attenders (unless otherwise specified).
 - (3) Church Discipline. All disciplinary action concerning LAGBC members, and any other person who desires to attend LAGBC functions, is ultimately the responsibility of the Community of Elders, including:
 - (a) recommended removal of an Elder, pursuant to Paragraph 4 above (1

Timothy 5:19-20);

- (b) restoration of a person involved in sin (Galatians 6:1); and
 - (c) disfellowship of a person who refuses to turn from a lifestyle of sin (Matthew 18:15-17). Any person so disfellowshipped may not attend LAGBC functions and/or exercise any privileges of membership until restored. The Community of Elders may restore an individual to fellowship by inviting them to resume attendance and/or be returned to membership status upon the Community of Elders' determination that the individual has confessed and repented from the sin(s) which brought about the disfellowship. The goal of all church discipline is restoration.
- (4) Church Membership. Responsibility for all matters and decisions pertaining to LAGBC membership and associate membership status will rest solely with the Community of Elders.

Section B. - Congregational Meetings

1. An annual meeting will be held for presentations such as annual reports, budget approvals, goals and such other business as may properly come before the meeting.
2. Special meetings may be called from time to time by the Community of Elders for extra items of business.
3. All business meetings will be publicly announced in at least two regularly scheduled services or in one service and mailed notification.
4. All decisions requiring a voted of the LAGBC membership will be decided by a two-thirds vote of those LAGBC members present at the meeting in which the vote takes place, unless otherwise specified herein.
5. The presence of at least 20% of the LAGBC membership will be necessary for the transaction of business at a congregational meeting.

Section C. - Church Year

LAGBC's fiscal year will run from July 1 to June 30. Budgets approved after the close of the fiscal year will be retroactive to the beginning of that year unless otherwise specified.

ARTICLE SEVEN – SUPPORTED CHURCH AND MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

Note: Leadership in the Body of Christ is an outgrowth of the call of God on an individual life. Not all leaders will need or receive financial support. Financial support is offered to those individuals whose calling is such that a lack of financial support would inappropriately restrict the leaders effectiveness in carrying out his or her calling.

Section A. - Supported Church Leaders

Supported Church Leaders will:

1. Be accountable to the Community of Elders or their representative.
2. Qualify and serve as a member of the Community of Elders

Section B. – Supported Ministry Leaders

Supported Ministry Leaders will:

1. Be accountable to an appropriate Church Leader.
2. Be selected based on calling and the needs of the ministry involved.

ARTICLE EIGHT - CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND REVIEW

All amendments to this Constitution will require a 75% vote of the LAGBC membership present at a congregational meeting called according to Article 6, Section B. This Constitution will be reviewed from time to time as deemed necessary by the Community of Elders for any needed improvements or changes.

ARTICLE NINE - LOS ALTOS BRETHERN SCHOOLS

Section A. - Ministry

The preschool and elementary school will offer a weekday educational program that emphasizes the spiritual, moral, academic, social and physical training befitting Christian growth and development. The schools will operate under the LAGBC's incorporation.

Section B. - Administration

The administrative heads of the schools will be:

1. Accountable to the Community of Elders or their representative.
2. Selected by and serve at the pleasure of the Community of Elders.
3. Members in good standing of LAGBC.

Section C. – Policies and Budgets

All school policies and budgets will be reviewed and approved by the Community of Elders. The Community of Elders will be consulted as appropriate regarding legal, personnel (i.e., hiring, firing, disciplinary actions) and other critical matters.