

THE ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF VALLEY HARVEST CHURCH
CHOWCHILLA, CA

CONTENTS

Article I - Name	1
Article II - Principal Place of Business.....	1
Article III - Non-Profit.....	1
Dedication of Assets	1
Affiliation.....	1
Article IV - Vision & Mission	1
Article V - Statement of Faith.....	2
Article VI - Qualification for membership	7
Section 1 – Admission	7
Section 2 – Rights of Membership.....	7
Section 3 – Discipline	7
Section 4 – Dismissal of Members	7
Article VII - Government.....	8
Section 1 – Definition & Responsibility.....	8
Section 2 – Qualifications.....	8
Section 3 – Selection.....	8
Section 4 – Size of Council.....	8
Section 5 – Roles & Responsibilities of the Elder Council	9
Section 6 – Unity of the Council of Elders	9
Section 7 – Removal & Resignation of Elders	9
Section 8 – Meeting & Forum	9
Article VIII - Deacons	10
Selection Process	10
Article IX - Special Committees.....	10
Article X - The Church Staff	10
Article XI - Meetings	10
Congregation Meetings.....	10
Annual Meetings.....	11
Amendment Approval.....	11
General Matters.....	11
Section 1 – Execution of Documents.....	11
Section 2 – Inspection of By-Laws.....	11
Section 3 – Constitution & Definitions.....	11
Section 4 – Policies & Procedures	11

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this church shall be Valley Harvest Church of Chowchilla, California.

ARTICLE II

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS

The principal office for the transaction of the business of the corporation is to be located in the County of Madera.

ARTICLE III

NON-PROFIT

The church is incorporated and chartered under the laws of the State of California. That this corporation shall not be operated for the profit of its members and that there shall never be any declaration of dividends or any distribution of profits or gains to members; that income from any operation of the corporation and all property owned or held by the corporation shall be devoted wholly to the promotion of its purposes as herein defined in Article IV. This corporation will not distribute any gain or profit or capital assets or other property to the members thereof; and that no part of the net earnings, if there ever be any, of this corporation shall ever accrue to the benefit of any member thereof or any other individual; and that it is a non-profit corporation organized solely for the religious, charitable, and educational activities, which are stated in the following Articles; and that this corporation does not contemplate distribution of gains, profits or dividends to the members thereof and shall never make any such distribution.

DEDICATION OF ASSETS

The property and facilities of this church are dedicated to its purpose and objectives. Upon the liquidation, dissolution or abandonment of the corporation, the property, facilities and funds will not inure to the benefit of any private individual, but rather to a fund, foundation or corporation organized and operated for like religious or charitable purposes.

AFFILIATION

This church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs independent of any denominational control. However, we recognize the benefits of cooperation with other churches in local, state, national and world missions.

ARTICLE IV

VISION & MISSION

To love all people in a way that allows the Holy Spirit to move them into a relationship with Jesus Christ. We resolve as follows:

1. To love God with all our heart, soul and strength.
2. To share the love of Jesus with everyone we meet.
3. To invite all people to belong to a loving community of believers.
4. To equip believers to serve others through their spiritual gifts and resources.
5. To inspire followers of Jesus Christ to lay down their lives to advance the Kingdom of God in the world.

ARTICLE V

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We affirm the Bible as the inspired Word of God and as the basis for our beliefs. This Church has adapted its Statement of Faith from the “2000 Baptist Faith and Message.” They are as follows:

I. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

The Bible (the 66 books in the Old & New Testament) was written by human authors divinely inspired and is the record of God’s revelation of Himself to humanity. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It is inerrant and infallible in its original manuscripts, which is to be taken as verbally inspired. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be measured. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16, 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18, 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2, 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21

II. GOD

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all-powerful and all-knowing and His perfect knowledge extends to all things past, present and future including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being.

A. GOD THE FATHER

God, as Father, reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving and all-wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all humanity.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff; 20:1ff; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalms 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3, 15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7

B. GOD THE SON

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and accomplished the will of God by taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with humanity, yet without sin. He honored God’s divine law by His personal obedience. With His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of humanity from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and humanity. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to complete His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff; Psalms 2:7ff; 110:1ff; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16, 27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6, 19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18, 29; 10:30, 38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16, 28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20, 28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5, 20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3, 34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8, 24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15, 24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the fully divine Spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables people to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts people of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He calls people to the Savior and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christ-like character, comforts believers and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer until the day of final redemption. His presence in the believer is the guarantee that God will ultimately bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believers in the church to worship, evangelize and serve.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10, 12; Luke 1:35; 4:1, 18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17, 39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28, 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11, 14-16, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8, 14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17

III. HUMANITY

Every person is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man and woman were innocent of sin and were endowed by their Creator with freedom of choice. By their free choice they sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan they transgressed the command of God and fell from their original innocence whereby their posterity inherits a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, all people become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring each person into fellowship with Him and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created every person in His own image, and that Christ died for all. Therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5, 7, 18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18, 23; 5:6, 12, 19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18, 29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19, 21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11

IV. SALVATION

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole person and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. REGENERATION

Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning

from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

B. JUSTIFICATION

Justification is God's gracious and full pardon of all sin, on the basis of the sufficiency of Christ's atoning death for all who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him/her. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerated person's life.

D. GLORIFICATION

Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14, 29; 3:3-21, 36; 5:24; 10:9, 28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18, 29-39; 10:9-10, 13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8, 14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5

V. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

Election is the gracious purpose of God by which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of humanity, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end of earthly life. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness and is infinitely wise, holy and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has chosen in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair certain blessings and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith until salvation is complete.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7, 19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16, 17:6, 12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10, 19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13,24-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. THE CHURCH

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. It observes the two ordinances of Christ governed by His laws, exercises the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeks to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ, the Chief Shepherd. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ, its leaders and each other.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ, which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, tongue, people and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3

VII. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin; the burial of the old life; and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus, whereby the believer, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorializes the death of our Lord Jesus Christ and anticipates His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20 John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 21; 11:23-39; Colossians 2:12

VIII. THE KINGDOM

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over people who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly, the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which people enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrew 11:10, 16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6, 9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22

IX. LAST THINGS

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all people in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 36, 44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40, 48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28, 35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8, 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18, 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

X. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of a person's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8, 16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8, 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17

XI. STEWARDSHIP

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately and liberally for the advancement of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21, 42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XII. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE CULTURE

All Believers are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in their own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among society can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, believers should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, vice and all forms of sexual immorality including: adultery, homosexuality and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every believer should seek to bring industry, government and society as a whole under the influence of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends, believers should be ready to work with all people of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalms 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XIII. THE FAMILY

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church. It is also to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to Biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband, even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on Biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6, 15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15, 17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8, 14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

ARTICLE VI

QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1 – ADMISSION

Any person having been born again and having followed in baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit may become a member of this local body by the following:

1. Professing and demonstrating saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Demonstrating a desire to unite with this congregation.
3. Willingly submitting to Christ as the Head of the Church, the leadership of this church, and to other members of the fellowship. (Eph. 1:22; 5:21; Heb. 13:17)
4. Completing the membership class which will include a review of the church constitution, church by-laws, the statement of faith and church membership covenant.
5. Sign the church membership covenant.

SECTION 2 – RIGHTS OF MEMBERSHIP

All members have the privilege of participating in the ministries of the church. Those 18 years of age and above have the right of participating when an affirmation of the membership is necessary. Such as:

1. Annual budget
2. Removal and selection of an Elder
3. Amending the Constitution
4. All property and real estate transactions; potential long term indebtedness
5. Merging or dissolving the articles of the corporation

To be considered for leadership, the individual must be a member.

SECTION 3 – DISCIPLINE

The desire of Valley Harvest is to edify and exhort our membership to a consistent Christian lifestyle. In the event that church discipline is necessary, the steps outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 will be pursued. The Council of Elders shall prayerfully and scripturally seek to interview all members violating the church covenant and they shall endeavor to restore them in Christian love. If, after failing to effect a restoration, there is no satisfactory evidence of genuine repentance, or of a sincere desire to live an exemplary Christian life, they shall regretfully recommend that proper action be taken in respect to further membership privileges in the interest of the reputation and Christian witness of the church. This matter is to be mercifully handled by the elders with a spirit of gentleness, but with authority.

SECTION 4 – DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

Members must be dismissed according to the following:

1. Letters of transfer for the purpose of uniting with some other church shall, upon request, be granted to members in good standing and shall be sent to the church with which the member wishes to unite.

2. Continued lack of interest and participation in the life of the church (illness or physical incapacitation excluded). When such condition continues for six months without any comment from the member involved after written notification from the Council of Elders.
3. Departure from the faith by advocating, teaching, or distributing literature contrary to the church's Statement of Faith (see Galatians 1).
4. Continuing sinful practices without repentance. Such action of dismissal shall be made in harmony with the steps outlined in Matthew 18:15-17; removal from church membership may take place upon the decision of the Council of Elders.
5. Death, personal written request, or by vote of the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE VII

GOVERNMENT

SECTION 1 – DEFINITION & RESPONSIBILITY

The Council of Elders is the governing body of this church and will function in legal matters as a Board of Directors. It is representative in form, and scripturally authoritative in ruling and leading all aspects of the congregation. This is the model that is seen throughout the early New Testament Church. Christ is the Head of His church, but works through called and elected officials to accomplish Kingdom matters in every local church body. (Acts 15:1-4 , 22; Philippians 1:1 ; 1 Timothy 3:1 ; Titus 1:5-9 ; 1 Peter 5:1-7 ; Acts 20:17-28 ; Hebrews 13:17)

SECTION 2 – QUALIFICATIONS

Elders personal qualifications are outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4. No man should be considered for the position of Elder who does not meet these scriptural standards. The terms Elder, Bishop, Pastor and Shepherd are recognized as referring to the same office of individuals who may, however, function differently in the body of Christ as the Holy Spirit gifts them. Pastoral Staff and general membership may serve as Elders. Each man is part of the governing body that sits on the council and are co-equals in shepherding the congregation.

Elder candidates must be members for at least one year before taking office. The Elder candidate must have undergone a prescribed course of study, as approved by the Council of Elders. After becoming an Elder, the man will go through a one-year probationary period and then serve for an unspecified term.

SECTION 3 – SELECTION

The Elder is a man raised up by God in the church to accomplish the spiritual oversight of the flock. It is our vision to seek out and grow healthy potential candidates for Eldership from within our congregation. Potential candidates may be suggested by the Membership and/or Council of Elders. The Council of Elders shall serve as the Screening Committee of Elder candidates on behalf of the Church. By unanimous recommendation by the Council of Elders, the potential candidate will be presented to the Membership for an affirmation vote. The affirmation vote will act as a guideline for the Elders in determining the final outcome. Upon the completion of the appointment process and the Council of Elders' final approval, the prospective elder will be publicly installed into office.

SECTION 4 – SIZE OF COUNCIL

The number of Elders on the Council shall be established by the Council of Elders itself to meet the needs of the body and to maintain the offices of Chairman (CEO), Secretary and Treasurer (CFO) as defined by the State of California. At no time shall size of the Council take precedent over having men that are qualified.

SECTION 5 – ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ELDER COUNCIL

Each man is part of a governing body that sits and acts together, as the representatives, and for the benefit of the local church. The Council of Elders forms a judicial assembly, by which all the spiritual interests of the congregation are to be watched over, regulated and authoritatively determined. Specifically, the duties of the Council of Elders include:

6. To lead the congregation in the way of the Lord by example. They must see themselves as servants of people. (Mark 10:35-45; John 13:1-15; I. Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Hebrews.13: 7, 17)
7. To feed, protect and care for the congregation just as Christ cares for His own. (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Peter 2:25; 1 Peter 5:1-8)
8. To teach the believers the Word of God in a variety of ways as God has gifted each man. (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 4:11, 12; 1 Timothy 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-4)
9. To rule the affairs of the church life. (1 Timothy 3:4-5; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2, 2)
10. To train and equip believers to do the work of ministry within the congregation. To intentionally develop leadership within the church body. (Ephesians 4:11, 12; 2 Timothy 2:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11).
11. To be involved in the disciplining of a church member whose conduct is contrary to the Bible. (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1)
12. To set forth a scriptural vision for the church and the individual that will bring glory to God and strength to the congregation. (Proverbs 29:18; Hosea 4:6)
13. To select and oversee deacons for particular service within the congregation who are recognized by the people of the congregation as devout, faithful and Holy Spirit filled men and women. (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim 3:8-13; Romans 16:1) (See Article VIII)

SECTION 6 – UNITY OF THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The congregation insists that, in the spirit of Christian love and service, the Elders present unified leadership, both publicly and privately, to and for the body. The Elders are not to present any recommendations to the church that are not unanimous.

SECTION 7 – REMOVAL & RESIGNATION OF ELDERS

Eldership may be terminated by the following:

1. Voluntarily through resignation to the council in writing.
2. Disqualification by the remainder of the Council of Elders for:
 - a. Failure to maintain scriptural standards of character (Section 2-Qualifications).
 - b. Failure to fulfill responsibilities and duties.

SECTION 8 – MEETING & FORUM

I. REGULAR MEETINGS

The Council of Elders shall conduct regular meetings (no less than quarterly) and special meetings at such times as called by the Chairman.

II. SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings for any purpose may be called at any time by the Chairman or any other two Elders. 60% of the Council membership shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting church business. Whenever the business of the Council of Elders concerns calling or dismissing a Staff Elder, the dismissal of an Elder, or financial decisions exceeding \$5,000, a quorum shall consist of not less than 80 % of the total number of Elders, (every effort should be made to obtain 100%).

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Council of Elders from time to time may find it necessary to consider employment decisions (wages, performance, etc.) of paid pastoral staff. Due to a potential conflict of interest, paid pastoral staff may be excluded from discussion and decisions of the Council of Elders.

Family members of an Elder may serve on the Council of Elders, but will be excluded from discussions and decisions related to any potential conflict of interest involving family members.

ARTICLE VIII

DEACONS

The Deacon is a man or woman raised up by God in the Church who renders service or ministers to the needs of another. The Deacons are to carry out the directives of the Elder Board in areas of service to the needs of the flock (see Acts 6:1-6; Romans 16:1).

SELECTION PROCESS

Deacon candidates must be members for at least one year before being considered. Potential candidates who meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13 may be suggested by the membership and/or Elders. The Council of Elders shall serve as the Screening Committee of Deacon candidates on behalf of the Church. By unanimous recommendation, the Council of Elders shall present the candidates to the membership for an affirmation vote. The affirmation vote will act as a guideline for the Elders in determining the final outcome.

ARTICLE IX

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

All special committees will be determined and directed by the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE X

THE CHURCH STAFF

The staff of the church will be responsible to the Council of Elders. Additional personnel will be added by the Council of Elders as needs arise. Staff members can only be added or dismissed by unanimous vote by the Council of Elders. The staff is to maintain a unified ministry with one another and before the church body.

Expectations and Annual performance reviews must be conducted by the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE XI

MEETINGS

CONGREGATION MEETINGS

Meetings of the membership may be called by the Council of Elders, whenever members are required or permitted to take any action. Meetings must be publicly announced at all weekend services two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Written announcements shall be placed in the bulletin and electronically communicated at least one week prior to the meeting. The notice shall specify the location, date, hour and purpose of the meeting. No abstentions or votes by proxy shall be counted.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

Annual meetings shall be conducted in the following manner:

1. The fiscal year of the church shall be from Oct 1 to Sept 30 and the budget will be presented to the congregation for an affirmation vote during the month of September.
2. The time of the annual business meeting of the church will be determined by the Council of Elders.
3. At any church business meeting the members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
4. A majority affirmation vote of the members present at any business meeting shall pass the budget.
5. The Council of Elders will determine the method in which the affirmation vote is taken.
6. In case of questions regarding parliamentary procedure, “Roberts Rules of Order” shall be used as a guideline, but shall not be considered binding upon the Elders or the will of the people.
7. One of the Elders shall moderate the business meetings of the church.
8. No abstentions or votes by proxy shall be counted.

AMENDMENT APPROVAL

Amendments to these By-Laws, after being presented by the Council of Elders to the congregation, may be adopted by a three-fourths (3/4) majority affirmation vote of the members present and voting at any annual or special business meeting. Notice of the proposed amendment by the church shall first be given to the membership of the church 20 days prior to the affirmation vote. Three-fourths (3/4) majority only applies to Article V (Statement of Faith) and Article VII (Government) and all other matters require two-thirds (2/3) majority.

GENERAL MATTERS

SECTION 1 – EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS

The Council of Elders may authorize any agent or agents to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of, and on behalf of the church, and such authority must be confined to specific instances; and, unless so authorized by the Council of Elders, no agent may enter into a contract, or engage, or pledge Valley Harvest’s credit, rendering it liable for any purpose for any amount. This does not apply to the full-time paid staff fulfilling their usual or ordinary ministry duties.

SECTION 2 – INSPECTION OF BY-LAWS

The church shall keep in its principle office the original, or a copy, of this constitution and by-laws as amended, or otherwise altered to date, which shall be open to inspection by the members at all reasonable times during office hours.

SECTION 3 – CONSTITUTION & DEFINITIONS

Unless the context otherwise requires, the general provisions, rules of construction and definitions contained in the California General Nonprofit Corporation Law shall govern the construction of this constitution and by-laws.

SECTION 4 – POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Valley Harvest will maintain a copy of all written policies and procedures in the church office. All activities of the church or ministries will be governed by these written policies and procedures. Additions and revisions or deletions of any written policies or procedures will be made by the Council of Elders.