HOW TO INCORPORATE A CHURCH

(The following steps can also be identified on this BC Registries Online website)

1. **Reserve A Name For Your Church**

    a. You must reserve a name for your church. This name must be unique to all other registered names in BC. This means, you may need your church members to approve a variation to your current name or a completely new name. This might be an appropriate time to change the name of your church, if you have been thinking of doing that.

    b. Access your Societies Online account (if you have one)

        i. Either:
            1. If you have an account, select:
                a. Login with your basic BCeID
                b. Incorporate a new society (along the left margin)
            2. Or, if you don't have an account, select:
                a. Register for basic BCeID
                b. Insert:
                    i. Your information
                c. Select: (returning to Societies Online)
                    i. Login with your basic BCeID
                d. Insert:
                    i. Your user and password
                e. Select:
                    i. Incorporate a new society (along the left margin)
        ii. Select:
            1. Request a name

        iii. Insert:
            1. Your personal information (not the church's)
            2. (in Researching box) The current name of your church or the completely new name for your church
                a. Confirm it is not being used by another church

        iv. Insert: (in Name Choice boxes)
            1. (if it is not used by another church) Your current name or completely new name
            2. A slight variation of this name (e.g. including the name of your community before this name)
            3. A second slight variation of this name (e.g. including 'of' and the name of your community after this name)

Note:

- The name should include a distinctive element (e.g. “Forest”), a descriptive element (e.g. “City”), and a corporate designation (e.g. "Church").
- If the distinct element is very unique, a name with only a distinctive element and a corporate designation may be adequate (e.g. “Broadway Church”)
- You must submit three options, but usually the first request is approved
- If the approved name is not your church’s current name, your members would need to approve the change at a duly called meeting with at least 66.67% of your quorum approving
    - Before presenting either a variation of or a completely new name, request district approval at darwin@bcyd.ca to confirm affiliation requirements.

v. Insert: (in the Nature of Business box)
    1. A non-profit society organized for the religious purpose of the "advancement of religion" and community or public benefit.

vi. Select:
    1. The processing time and fee of choice
    2. Submit
    3. Proceed to Payment

2. Establish The Constitution and Bylaws For Your Church

a. Determine:
    i. The governance model of your church (continuing as is or changing):
        1. Elected Board (elected governance)
        2. Pastor’s Council (appointed governance)
        3. Leadership Team (elected and appointed governance)

    Note:

    - If you would like to change the governance model of your church, your members would need to approve the change at a duly called meeting with at least 66.67% of your quorum approving

b. Download:
    i. The Purposes and Bylaws relative to your governance model through the BCYD website, under Incorporated Churches

ii. Choose:
    1. 2022 Purposes (this will make up your one-page constitution along with the registered name of your church)
        a. Then, save this on your device in Word format
    2. 2026 Bylaws (choose the version relative to the governance of your church)
        a. Insert the name of your church, as approved by BC Societies, in both locations one page one that are highlighted. Then, unhighlight the font
        b. Insert the date of your member's meeting in the yellow highlighted place on the last page of the Bylaws just before the Statement of Essential Truths. Then, unhighlight the font
        c. Then, save this on your device in pdf format
    3. Incorporating A Church – Resolution (under Unincorporated Churches on the BCYD website)

3. Call a Duly Called Members' Meeting

a. This meeting may be at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting
b. A 14-day notice must be provided through public announcements (emailed can help).
c. Post the Incorporating A Church Resolutions document in a location of the church, where members can locate and review it. A copy of both the Constitution and Bylaws documents could also be available to view. If it would be helpful to have the differences highlighted (all the BC Societies Act elements), please contact Darwin Pichette (Assistant District Superintendent of Operations) at darwin@bcyd.ca.

4. At Your Members' Meeting

a. Ensure that a quorum is in attendance.

b. Refer to Bylaw 3.6 in your current Constitution and Bylaws version, to confirm your church's quorum (e.g. 25%, 40%, other).

c. 'In attendance' would include those who are present in the room, but it may also include those who are tuned in remotely through a video platform (they must be able to see, hear, talk, and be heard like those who are present in the room). In both cases, must be identified by the chair in the voting bar for members.

d. Provision may be made for absentee votes, for Members who, in the opinion of the Board, would be legitimately unable to attend and requesting to submit their votes. Such votes are only allowed on the first ballot, if the Members in attendance at the General Meeting would approve by Ordinary Resolution and if no further relevant positive or negative input relating to the vote is given in the meeting. (note: these are not proxy votes – proxy voting is not allowed)

e. To approve the Resolution:

    i. At least sixty-six point sixty-seven percent (66.67%) of the members in attendance of the duly called member's meeting must be in favor of the Resolution.
    ii. This will be one motion from the leadership of the church, requiring only one omnibus vote to approve.

5. Following Your Members' Meeting – Registering Your Constitution and Bylaws

a. Complete your application to incorporate, as instructed by BC Societies in the email or letter that they provided you.

b. Paste the list of Purposes (Word format) into your online BC Societies account.

    i. Login
        1. Select 'more options' on the left column
        2. Find 'change of purposes'
        3. Select the date of your member's meeting
        4. Paste the list of Purposes (Word format) in the box
        5. Select 'finalize and pay'
        6. Download the registered document
            a. Select:
                i. Along the top, 'filing history'
                ii. In right margin, 'constitution'
            b. Save this to your device

c. Upload the pdf Bylaws document into your online BC Societies account.

    i. Login
        1. Select 'change to bylaws' on the left column
        2. Select the date of your member's meeting
        3. Do not select that your society is altering previously unalterable provisions
        4. Paste in the box: Registering bylaws

5. Select ‘upload’ and proceed with payment.
6. Download the registered document
    a. Select:
        i. Along the top, ‘filing history’
        ii. In right margin, ‘bylaws
    b. Save this to your device

d. Register the Constitution and Bylaws document with CRA that you’ve registered and download from you BC Societies account.

i. The CRA Charities Directorate has mandated that registering of any and all documents must take place through your church’s online CRA My Business Account.

ii. To create this CRA My Business Account (if you don’t have one):

1. At least one church leader must have a CRA RepID. To do so create a RepID here: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/represent-a-client/use-service.html

    a. Create a personal CRA My Account here: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/cra-login-services/register-cra-sign-in-services.html

2. Link your church’s CRA My Business Account by:

    a. On the Welcome page, select: +Add account.
    b. Choose: Business account.
    c. Select: Add an existing business number (BN).
    d. Enter your 9-digit Business Number and submit.
    e. You may be asked to confirm details from a previously filed GST/HST or corporate tax return to verify you own the business.

3. Create your church’s CRA My Business Account, if you don’t have one, here: https://www.canada.ca/en/services/taxes/business-registration.html

iii. To add your church to your CRA My Business Account (if you haven’t already):

1. On your home page, scroll to the bottom and select ‘registered

charity'.
2. On the next page, select 'profile' on the left column.
3. On the third page, scroll down to 'business numbers' and select 'manage business numbers'.
4. On the fourth page, select 'add another business'.
5. Follow prompts.

iv. To upload your Constitution and Bylaws documents:

1. On your home page, scroll to the bottom and select 'registered charity'.
2. On the second page, select 'update registered charity or RCAAA information'
3. On the third page, select 'category', select 'amend governing document'
4. On the fourth page, paste the following in the white box: Please rescind our current Bylaws document and replace it with the attached documents, which has been approved by the members of our church.
5. In attachment #1 box, paste the following in the white box: 2026 Constitution
    a. Choose the registered Constitution document (pdf format) that you saved to your device
6. In attachment #2 box, paste the following in the white box: 2026 Bylaws
    a. Choose the registered Bylaws document (pdf format) that you saved to your device

v. Select 'choose file' and find the file in the folder on your computer that you saved your Bylaws document in which you have downloaded from your online BC Societies account.

1. Select 'submit' at the bottom of the page

e. Email a copy of both your registered Constitution and Bylaws documents to the District at darwin@bcyd.ca.

***If you have any questions**, please email Darwin Pichette (Assistant District Superintendent of Operations) at darwin@bcyd.ca*