

Waukesha Bible Church Constitution

Ratified by the Church Membership on January 31, 2016

1 Preface

1.1 Organizational Name

This organization shall be known as Waukesha Bible Church.

1.2 Our Vision

“They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

1.3 Our Mission

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20).

1.4 Purpose of the Constitution

The purpose of a Constitution is to provide the organization and its members:

1. A means to govern themselves
2. Information regarding the way the organization functions
3. Guidelines by which the organization operates
4. A structure inside of which all church matters are managed

2 Statement of Faith

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of a Statement of Faith is to put in writing the basic elements of Biblical truth. Since the times of the New Testament, those who believe its special revelation have intentionally articulated the ideas of Scripture in precise words. The intent is never to add to Scripture, but to be exact and precise. It is also to make available to the inquirer what a voluntarily assembled group of like-minded people believe in common.

2.2 Governance

The Statement of Faith shall be governed and revised in the same manner as described in the Constitution Revision section.

2.3 Statement of Faith

See separate document for our Statement of Faith.

3 Membership

3.1 Becoming a Member

Persons desiring to unite in membership with this church shall attend a membership class and submit a completed Membership Application. Elders of the church are to interview applicants to determine the basis of their salvation and to hear their testimony. The Elders report to the Elder Council and those applicants approved by the Elder Council will be granted membership at the time of Elder Council approval. New members are to be presented to the congregation.

Applicants for membership must agree with the official positions of Waukesha Bible Church as outlined in the Statement of Faith and the church Constitution. As a fellowship, we understand that good people of like faith may differ in how they interpret Scriptures on certain doctrinal points. Our intent is not to exclude but rather include people of like faith. We welcome into our fellowship those who might have a slightly different view on these issues as long as they agree to accept the official position of Waukesha Bible Church. Differing views on these issues are permissible but should not be promoted so as to divide the unity of the body.

3.2 Reinstatement

Previous members in good standing may request reinstatement by submitting a completed Membership Application to any member of the Elder Council. An Elder shall contact the applicant to verify their intent and determine if they once again qualify for membership. Membership will be reinstated as of the date the Elder Council approves the applicant.

3.3 Responsibilities

Members are encouraged to:

- Attend church regularly
- Financially support the ministries of this local church and its outreach, through grace giving. (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1 15; 2 Cor. 9:6 8)
- Serve the body in their area of giftedness

3.4 Withdrawal or Removal

Any Member upon written request to the Elder Council may have their name removed from the church membership roll.

A member will be removed from the church membership roll by the Elder Council under any of these conditions:

- 1) The Elder Council substantiates the person has joined another church
- 2) When efforts fail to locate the person
- 3) Inconsistent attendance over six months
- 4) Relocation of primary attendance
- 5) The member is deceased
- 6) Belief in and/or propagation of false/heretical doctrine
- 7) Rejection of the Waukesha Bible Church Constitution.

At least once each year, the Elder Council shall make certain the Church Membership Roll is reviewed. If a member is reachable and under consideration for removal, the member will be contacted by the Elders regarding the intent of their membership. The Elder Council shall notify the person of any change in membership status.

3.5 Discipline

The Elder Council, in behalf of the congregation, will address matters of a corporate nature when an individual “causes dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:9-11).” Personal grievances between members shall be reconciled according to the principles offered in Matthew 18:21-35. The Elder Council will verify compliance with Scriptural guidelines in overseeing situations escalating to a corporate level. As appropriate, the Elder Council will define the scope of public announcement should non-repentance be evident (Matt. 18:15-20). The intent of all discipline processes is to restore fellowship.

4 Church Organization

4.1 Introduction

Waukesha Bible Church acknowledges the Lord Jesus as the Head of the Church, the Bible as the Word of God and the infallible guide for the church, and the Holy Spirit as its teacher.

This church shall be led by an Elder Council which will provide spiritual leadership and direction for the church as well as oversee all ministry of the church. The Church Membership shall have and provide input to church matters as described within this Constitution.

4.2 Elder Council

The Membership of Waukesha Bible Church grants governing authority over spiritual and material matters to the Elder Council, subject to the provisions in this Constitution. While retaining oversight responsibility, the Council may delegate authority and/or responsibility for any purpose.

4.2.1 Membership

There shall be a minimum of five council elders. This minimum shall not be maintained by compromising any of the following Elder qualifications. Paid pastoral staff shall consist of no more than one third of the elder council.

4.2.2 Qualifications

Elders must be born again men who demonstrate the qualities found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. They are to be wise and godly men in their home and in the church. They must through their character and competence as tested men, have gained the confidence of those with whom they deal, both inside and outside the Body. They must be members of this church and have served in a Ministry Area within this church prior to becoming an Elder.

4.2.3 Responsibilities

The Elder Council shall be responsible for the spiritual growth and care of the congregation. They shall also be responsible for oversight and shepherding of Ministry Areas.

Shepherding Functions

- Involvement in the spiritual care of the congregation
- Involvement in teaching and discipleship
- Visitation and pastoral care in conjunction with the pastoral staff

Oversight Functions

- Seek out areas that need assistance and encourage the formation of new ministries
- Maintain contact and communication with the leadership in each Ministry Area
- Set vision, direction, and approval of church finances
- Set, review, and administer policies
- Initiate long range planning
- Ensure that administration of plans and policies are in accordance with church and ministry needs, directions, and priorities
- Prepare an Annual Report which is to include progress reports from each ministry
- Oversee the ordination process

4.2.4 Selection Process

When Elders are to be selected, the Elder Council shall inform the Membership that recommendations for candidates will be welcomed. The Council shall review the candidates to determine their qualifications. Those Elder-Candidates approved by at least 75% of all the Elders on the Council shall be presented as Elder Candidates to the Membership at least one month prior to a Congregational Meeting. During that period, any member who knows any reason why a candidate does not meet the Scriptural qualifications for an Elder should present their objection to the Elder Council. At the Congregational Meeting, the Membership shall vote to affirm the candidates as Elders.

4.2.5 Term of Office

The term for Elders shall be three years. The term shall begin and end at the appropriate annual congregational meeting. Unexpired terms may be filled or Elders may be added at any time during the year. A man may serve an unlimited number of terms but must go through the selection process and be affirmed by the Membership for each three year term. All pastoral staff are permanent members of the Council in context to the Elder Council Membership section.

4.2.6 Officers

The Elder Council shall elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Clerk from within the Council each year at the first Council meeting following the Annual Congregational Meeting. Pastoral staff or Support staff may not hold any of these positions. The Chairman of the Elder Council shall lead Council and Congregational Meetings, and in his absence, the Vice-Chairman or Clerk shall preside in that order. The Clerk or his designee shall record Council and Congregational Meetings, maintain the Membership Roll, and be the custodian of the church records. The Elder Council shall elect a Treasurer, who may or may not be a Council member, but meets all elder qualifications. The Treasurer is a member of the Finance Committee and is responsible for recording gifts. Terms for Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Clerk, and Treasurer shall be one year.

4.2.7 Meetings

The Council shall meet on a regular basis, with the intention to meet not less than once per month. A quorum of 51% of all the Elders on the Council, and at least 51% non-Pastoral Staff, is required to transact business. Elders will strive to achieve unanimity in decision making, but may decide an issue

with at least 75% majority vote of the Elders present, except where otherwise noted in this Constitution. A Council Elder is expected to be in regular attendance at Council meetings.

The Council may take any action without a meeting at the request of the Chairman. The Chairman will communicate the matter under consideration to the Elders in writing or by electronic communication. If each of the Elders indicates consent to the proposed action in writing or by electronic communication, the proposed action shall be considered as adopted by the Elder Council.

4.2.8 Discipline

Those selected by the Elders and affirmed by the congregation shall maintain the integrity of the office (1 Tim. 3:2). Any cause for removal shall be handled by the sitting Elders according to the principles found in 1 Timothy 5:19-22. If the allegation is found true, the Elders will act in behalf of the community and determine the scope of public announcement should non-repentance be evident (Matt. 18:15-20). The intent of all discipline processes is to restore fellowship.

4.3 Deacons and Deaconesses

Deacons and Deaconesses (hereafter referred to as “Deacons”) are responsible to the Elder Council and have the special ministry of assisting people in need.

4.3.1 Membership

There shall be a minimum of seven Deacons. This minimum shall not be maintained by compromising any of the following Deacon qualifications. There shall be an unlimited number of Deacons.

4.3.2 Qualifications

Deacons must be born again men or women who demonstrate qualities found in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. They must be members of this church and served in a Ministry Area within this church prior to becoming a Deacon or Deaconess.

4.3.3 Responsibilities

The Deacons shall be responsible for:

1. Overseeing distribution of the benevolence fund
2. Overseeing benevolent acts of service to those in physical need
3. Overseeing church buildings and grounds
4. Special projects and responsibilities delegated by the Elder Council

4.3.4 Selection Process

When Deacons are to be selected, the Elder Council shall inform the Membership that recommendations for candidates will be welcomed. The Council shall review the candidates to determine their qualifications. Those Deacon-Candidates approved by at least 75% of all the Elders on the Council shall be presented as Deacon Candidates to the Membership at least one month prior to a Congregational Meeting. During that period, any member who knows any reason why a candidate does not meet the Scriptural qualifications for a Deacon should present their objection to

the Elder Council. At the Congregational Meeting, the Membership shall vote to affirm the candidates as Deacons.

4.3.5 Term of Office

A Deacon's term shall be two years. The term will begin and end as determined by the Elder Council. Unexpired terms may be filled or additional Deacons may be added at any time following this selection process. A Deacon may serve an unlimited number of terms.

4.3.6 Officers

The Deacons shall elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Clerk from within the group at the first Deacon meeting following the Annual Congregational Meeting. Pastoral staff may not hold any of these positions. The Chairman of the Deacons shall lead Deacon Meetings, and in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairman shall preside. The Clerk or his designee shall record Deacon Meetings. Terms for Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Clerk shall be one year.

4.3.7 Meetings

The Deacons shall meet on a regular basis, with the intention to meet not less than once per month. A quorum of 51% of all the Deacons is required to transact business. Deacons will strive to achieve unanimity in decision making, but may decide an issue with at least 75% majority vote of the Deacons present, except where otherwise noted in this Constitution. A Deacon is expected to be in regular attendance at meetings.

The Deacons may take any action without a meeting at the request of the Chairman. The Chairman will communicate the matter under consideration to the Deacons in writing or by electronic communication. If each of the Deacons indicates consent to the proposed action in writing or by electronic communication, the proposed action shall be considered as adopted by the Deacons.

4.3.8 Discipline

Those selected as Deacons shall maintain the integrity of the office (1 Timothy 3:8-12). Any cause for removal shall be handled by the Elders according to the principles found in 1 Timothy 5:19-22. If the allegation is found true, the Elders will act in behalf of the community and determine the scope of public announcement should non-repentance be evident (Matt. 18:15-20). The intent of all discipline processes is to restore fellowship.

4.4 Church Finances

Church finances shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee with oversight by the Elders.

4.4.1 Membership

The Finance Committee shall be appointed by the Elder Council. At least one member of the committee shall be an elder. Paid pastoral staff shall consist of no more than one third of the committee and elders shall comprise no more than one third of the committee.

4.4.2 Qualifications

All members of the committee shall be members of this church and must have served in a Ministry Area within this church prior to becoming a committee member.

4.4.3 Responsibilities

The committee shall be responsible for:

1. Monitoring gifts and expenditures throughout the year
2. Coordination of financial planning
3. Creating an annual budget proposal
4. Advising Elders on any financial concerns

4.4.4 Term of Office

All committee members serve a one year term. The term will begin and end with the church fiscal year. Unexpired terms may be filled or committee members may be added at any time following this selection process. A member may serve an unlimited number of terms.

4.4.5 Officers

The committee shall elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman from within the group at the first meeting of the Fiscal Year. The Chairman shall lead meetings, and in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairman shall preside. The Treasurer shall be responsible for recording committee meetings.

4.4.6 Meetings

A quorum of 51% is required to transact business. Finance committee members will strive to achieve unanimity in decision making, but may decide financial matters with at least 75% vote of those present. A committee member is expected to be in regular attendance at meetings.

The Finance Committee may take any action without a meeting at the request of the Chairman of the Finance Committee. The Chairman will communicate the matter under consideration to the Finance Committee Members in writing or by electronic communication. If each of the Committee members indicates consent to the proposed action in writing or by electronic communication, the proposed action shall be considered as adopted by the Finance Committee.

4.4.7 Constraints

Both the Finance Committee and the Elder Council shall not approve a non-budgeted financial expenditure greater than or equal to 5% of the current fiscal year church budget, without congregational approval. Likewise, both groups shall not approve accumulated non-budgeted expenditures throughout the fiscal year greater than or equal to 10% of the church budget.

4.4.8 Gifts

The recording and reporting of gifts (as long as the Internal Revenue Service allows deductions for gifts to this organization) shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer. The Treasurer may designate one person to record and report gifts in his stead. This information will not be available to any other person except the giver and the Internal Revenue Service, if required.

4.5 Congregational Responsibilities

The Membership of Waukesha Bible Church grants governing authority to the Elder Council. The Membership, is however, responsible to receive and act upon the recommendations of the Elder Council in the following matters:

- Calling or dismissing pastoral staff
- Affirming Elders
- Affirming Deacons
- Approving budgets for each budget year
- Approving major non-budgeted financial expenditures greater than or equal to 5% of the current Fiscal Year church budget
- Approving the purchase, sale, mortgage, or transfer of real estate property
- Approving or revoking ordination credentials
- Approving association and/or denomination memberships
- Approving revisions to this Constitution
- Acting on other business as may be requested by the Elder Council
- Dissolving this church

4.6 Congregational Meetings

Congregational Meetings will be held with the Membership.

4.6.1 Meetings and Agenda

Except where otherwise noted in this Constitution, a meeting and its agenda, including issues to be voted on, must be announced during at least two regularly scheduled services; one of the announcements must be made at least 14 days in advance of the meeting.

There shall be a minimum of one Congregational Meeting per year at a time and date to be determined by the Elders. This shall be known as the Annual Meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Include reports from the ministries and minutes from the prior Annual Meeting
- Present new Elders and Deacons for affirmation
- Present a Financial Report
- Present an annual budget for the next budget year for approval
- Transact other scheduled business

Special congregational meetings may be called by the Elder Council or by request of 20% of the church membership. This request must be presented to the Elder Council in writing with the reason for the meeting clearly stated and the names of the members making the request.

4.6.2 Attendance

All members are encouraged to attend Congregational Meetings. Except where otherwise noted in this Constitution, meetings will be open to non-members, though only Members may participate in discussion.

4.6.3 Rules of Order

Meetings with the Membership are to be governed by parliamentary rules as contained in the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order. If specific procedures in this Constitution conflict with Roberts Rules of Order, then this Constitution will take precedence.

4.6.4 Quorum

A quorum of 20% of members must be present to hold these meetings except where otherwise noted in this Constitution.

4.6.5 Absentee Ballots and Registration

Votes may be cast by absentee ballot which shall be available at least 14 days prior to the meeting. Ballot requests are the responsibility of Members. All ballots must be signed and verified as from members by the Elder Council Clerk prior to the start of the meeting. Members will be required to register their attendance at Congregational Meetings. Signed absentee ballots received prior to a meeting shall constitute registration.

4.6.6 Voting

To pass a motion, at least 75% of the total votes cast (excluding abstentions) must be in favor of the motion, except where otherwise noted in this Constitution. Voting shall be by secret ballot when calling pastoral staff, terminating pastoral staff, affirming Elders and Deacons, or when requested and approved by a majority of the members present.

4.7 Conflict of Interest

The pastoral staff, Support Staff, Elders and Deacons may not be the personal representative of the estate of a member of this church which would benefit this church or themselves without advanced notification to, and approval of the Elder Council. Immediate family estates are exempt from this restriction.

4.8 Constitutional Revisions

The Elder Council may recommend to the Membership changes to this Constitution. The documented changes must be provided to the Members as part of the Congregational Meeting notice. The same procedures for approving any other motion during a Congregational Meeting are to be used, with the exception that a quorum of 51% of the Members must either be present or represented by their absentee ballot.

4.9 Dissolution

To dissolve this church, the same procedures for approving any other motion during a Congregational Meeting are to be used, with the exception that a quorum of 51% of the Members must either be present or

represented by their absentee ballot. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, director, or officer of the corporation, nor shall any private individual be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporation assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the corporation must be distributed in this order of preference: (1) Christian organizations which have a Doctrinal Statement that is compatible with this church. (2) One or more charitable or educational organizations. Any chosen organization must be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service for charitable, religious or educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Preference shall be given to organizations affiliated with this church.

5 Personnel

5.1 Pastoral Staff

5.1.1 Hiring

The Elder Council shall form a Search Committee of at least five members, for the purpose of searching out and interviewing suitable candidates for the position of Pastor. No member of the Pastoral or Support Staff may serve on this committee. The committee shall interview the wife of the candidate to assure that she is in accord with his ministry. Pastoral staff shall be ordained or willing to be ordained.

The Search Committee shall submit a recommendation on the pastoral candidate to the Elder Council. The Council shall then also interview the candidate. Upon unanimous approval of all the Elders on the Council, the Council shall submit their recommendation to the Church Membership.

The pastoral candidate shall be afforded an opportunity to preach at church services, as the Search Committee may direct, subject to Elder Council approval.

A Congregational Meeting to vote on extending an invitation to a pastoral candidate to become a member of the pastoral staff shall be scheduled by the Elder Council and follow congregational meeting procedures, with the exception that a quorum of 51% of the Members must either be present or represented by their absentee ballot. At least 75% of the total votes cast must be in favor of extending an invitation to a candidate.

5.1.2 Membership

Upon the candidate's acceptance of the Membership's invitation, he becomes a church member. Any other family members desiring church membership shall follow the membership procedures.

5.1.3 Duties

The Pastoral staff shall perform all duties as described in the job description, of which, the Elder Council is responsible for creating and maintaining.

5.1.4 Term of Office

The Pastoral staff shall serve for an unlimited term, unless other arrangements are made at the time the pastoral invitation is provided and accepted.

5.1.5 Termination

The relationship between the Pastoral staff and the church may be dissolved by the resignation of the Pastoral staff member or by a Membership vote. A Congregational Meeting to terminate pastoral staff shall be scheduled by the Elder Council and follow congregational meeting procedures, with the exception that a quorum of 51% of the Members, including absentee ballots, is required. A majority of the total votes cast, not counting abstentions, is required for dismissal. The Pastor shall give, and be given, a minimum of thirty days notice of intended date of termination of service. In the event the Membership votes that the Pastor's services be terminated abruptly, he may receive one month termination salary, from the date of termination, subject to Elder Council approval.

5.1.6 Interim Pastoral Staff

Interim or short term Pastors may be appointed by unanimous vote of the elder board. If the term of an interim Pastor exceeds 18 months, congregational meeting procedures shall be followed to renew interim status for an additional six months or affirmation of full time pastoral staff as described in the Hiring section.

5.2 Support Staff

5.2.1 Definition

Any employee of the church, who is not provided the title or assigned the duties of a pastor, is considered Support Staff.

5.2.2 Hiring

All position needs are assessed and created by the Elder Council. The staff's pay must be included in the annual church budget and must be approved by the church membership.

The Elder Council or a committee formed by the Elder Council shall interview all candidates for the position. The spouse of the candidate shall also be interviewed to assure that there is agreement with the candidate's possible employment. Upon unanimous approval of the Elder Council, the Council shall offer a position to the candidate.

5.2.3 Membership

All staff must be or become church members.

5.2.4 Duties

Support Staff shall perform all duties as described in the job description, of which, the Elder Council is responsible for creating and maintaining. All support staff report to the Elder Council.

5.2.5 Duration

If applicable, the employment duration for Support Staff shall be determined by the Elder Council at the time of calling or employment. Extensions of the term will be at the discretion of the Elder Council.

5.2.6 Termination

The relationship between Support Staff and the church may be dissolved by the expiration of the staff member's term, resignation, or dismissal by the Elder Council. The Support Staff member shall give, and be given, a minimum of thirty day notice of intended date of termination of service. In the event the Elder Council votes that the Support Staff's services be terminated abruptly, he/she may receive one month's termination salary, from the date of termination, subject to Elder council approval.