

Church Constitution and By-Laws



Rev. Richard D. Butts, Senior Pastor

(281) 492-3448 www.mywestside.org

3883 Lakes of Bridgewater Drive

Katy, TX 77449

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

OF

WESTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Preamble

Having received by faith the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation...

- *Believing the Bible to be the divinely inspired infallible and authoritative Word of God,*
- *Accepting the historic, distinctive, Baptist principles in so much as they are in complete agreement with the Bible,*
- *Knowing that all things should be done decently and in order,*

We therefore band ourselves together as a body of born-again, immersed believers in Jesus Christ and hereby adopt the following constitution as our method of labor for the Lord.

Article I - Name

*The name of this church is: **Westside Baptist Church of Houston, Texas, incorporated** under the laws of the State of Texas on March 19, 1981.*

Article II - Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be...

- *A soul-winning institution*
- *To preach the Gospel of Jesus*
- *To administer the ordinances of the New Testament*
- *To promote the spiritual growth of its members*
- *To provide a Christian education in all of its aspects*
- *To evangelize the world as a Bible believing, missionary minded, evangelistically alive, independent, fundamental Baptist church should do.*

We will endeavor to accomplish this purpose through various ministries including: Christian School, Sunday School (youth and adult), Youth Fellowship, Nursery, Bus Ministry, Home Bible Studies, Bible Clubs, Bible School, Rest Home Services, Radio and Television, Orphanage, Sunday Morning and Evening Services, Midweek Prayer and Bible Study Services, Evangelistic Meetings, Home and Hospital Visitation Programs, the support and sending out of missionaries, Literature Distribution, Day Care, Bible Institute and through any other necessary co-related ministries needed to accomplish the Lord's work.

Article III – Character

Section I-Doctrinal Position

A. **Inspiration of the Scriptures**

- We believe the Holy Scriptures as contained in the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God, inerrant, infallible, powerful and God breathed. ~ Psalm 19:7-11; II Tim. 3:16, 17 and II Peter 1:16-21 ~
- The Bible has sole authority in all matters of faith, conduct and practices.
- We believe this excludes practices such as: speaking in tongues, baptizing infants, sales, and suppers to raise money, woman preaching and teaching over grown men and alcoholic wine in communion.

B. **God, the Father**

- We believe in God the Father, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, and measureless in power.
- We rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all that come to Him through Jesus Christ. Matthew 6:9; Isaiah 40:28; Job 42:2; Proverbs 5:21; Jeremiah 33:3 & John 14:6

C. **Jesus Christ**

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and propitiuous death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal, pre-tribunational return for His saints and His pre-millennial return in power and glory with His saints to establish His eternal reign in righteousness.

John 1:1-14; John 14:9; Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; John 10:36; Heb. 2:9; John 6:44-69; John 3:1-18; Romans 3:25; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 9:22; I Peter 1:18, 19; Acts 3:12-26; John 20; Heb. 9:25; I Cor. 15:12-28; I Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15: 50-55; Acts 1:11; Titus 2:13; Jude 14:15 and Matt. 25:31-46

D. **The Holy Spirit**

- We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead and the active person of the Godhead in the world today.
- We believe He is sent into the world to convict the world of sin, of righteousness and judgement. John 16:7-11
- We believe the Holy Spirit baptizes all born-again people into the Body of Christ. I Cor. 12:13
- We believe in the indwelling of believers by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:14-27 We believe the Holy Spirit teaches, helps, guides, and protects the believer in this life. John 14:16-26

E. **God and the Trinity**

We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. ~ I John 5:7; John 1:18 and I Cor. 2:9, 10 ~

- The Father is God. Romans 1:7
- The Son is God. Hebrews 1:18
- The Holy Spirit is God. Acts 5:3-4

F. **Justification by Faith**

We believe that man is justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ~ Romans 5:1 ~

G. **Eternal Security**

We believe in the perseverance of the saints and that every born-again believer is eternally secure in our Lord Jesus Christ. ~ John 10:27-29 ~

H. **Separation from the World**

We believe that all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ are called into the life of separation from worldly and sinful practices and unto the Lord as His personal property. ~ James 4:4; Romans 12:1-2; I John 2:15-16 and II Cor. 6:14-18 ~

I. **Evangelism**

We believe that the commission of the true church of Christ is to be evangelical, missionary, evangelistic and fundamental; therefore, we believe in carrying the Gospel to every creature, baptizing believers in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. ~ Matthew 28:16-20 ~

J. **Personality of Satan**

We believe in the personality of Satan, “That old serpent called the devil, and Satan which deceiveth the whole world.” ~ Rev. 12:9,10; Matt. 4:2-11; Isaiah 14:12-17 and John 8:24

K. **Sin**

We believe in the universality and exceeding wickedness of sin.

Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 3:10-26 and Romans 6:23

We believe that man is a sinner both by nature & by choice. Romans 5:12

L. **Heaven and Hell**

We believe that heaven is a literal place of eternal blessedness, and the destination of the saved.

We believe that hell is a literal place of eternal suffering and the destination of the unbeliever. II Cor. 5:1-10; Rev. 20:1-15 & Rev. 21:2

M. **Good Works**

We believe that all born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ should be careful to maintain good works. Good works have no saving merit in themselves. ~ Eph. 4:1; Titus 2:11-14; Titus 3:1-11 and Eph. 2:8-10

N. The Church

- *We believe that the church universal consists of all those who in the present dispensation, truly believe and accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.*
- *We believe in the local church, independent, autonomous, indigenous and free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority, subject only to the authority and Lordship of Christ, its head. I Cor. 1:2 and Matt. 16:16-18*
- *We believe there are two ordinances of the church: baptism by immersion, and the Lord's supper. We believe that both are for the purpose of symbolizing the identification of the believer with the Lord Jesus Christ and that they have no saving merit in themselves. Mt. 28:19; Rom. 6:1-6; I Cor. 11:23-32 & Lk. 22:15-20*

Section 2 – Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into a covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotion; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drink as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior, to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage, that when we move from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. If the time should come when we can no longer uphold the doctrine and practice of the church, nor follow its pastor when he is upholding the doctrine and practice of the church, we will quietly withdraw all our contact and association from the church and advise the pastor of our purpose so as not to be used of Satan to cause confusion, division, and thus be brought before the church for discipline.

Section 3 – Policy

The leadership of this church shall be vested in the under shepherd, who is the pastor, deacons, and trustees who shall recommend to the congregation those things which they feel the church should do or undertake. In matters of discipline and spiritual direction, the pastor and the deacons shall determine scriptural policy; and in matters financial and otherwise, the trustees shall recommend action and the congregation shall decide by voting. Details are given in the constitution.

Section 4 – Spiritual Convictions

A. Discipline of Children

It is our conviction based on the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, that “a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame,” (Proverbs 29:15) “and the rod of correction and reproof will bring wisdom to a child.” “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.” (Proverbs 22:15) We believe, therefore, that a child should receive corporal punishment when needed, administered with love and concern, and accompanied with a thorough explanation of why he or she is being punished. We believe it is important to pray with the child who is being disciplined, encouraging him or her to seek God's forgiveness and His help to live as he or she ought.

B. The Family Unit

We believe the Family is the first institution established by God. We believe children are the property of God, and He places them in the custody of their parents, to whom He gives the responsibility for discipline, education, and training along with spiritual guidance.

~ Genesis 3 and 4; Proverbs 23:22, Ephesians 6:1, 2 and Exodus 20:12 ~ We also believe it is the God given responsibility of the church, through its ministries, to strengthen this discipline and teaching as a second line of defense. ~ I Thess. 5:11-25 and the book of Ephesians

C. Education

We believe that in order to protect the minds of our children from the godless philosophies of the world, namely communism, socialism, humanism, evolution, the occult, etc. It is the church's sacred responsibility to educate the children of its families, and the families of other churches of like convictions and beliefs. ~ Psalm 1:1-6; Proverbs 22:6; Matthew 28:19, 20 and Acts 5:42 ~

Article IV – Membership

Section 1– Reception of Members

Candidates for membership shall publicly make known their desire to unite with this church by coming forward at the close of any regular service of the church. At that time, they shall be given a copy of the constitution, by-laws, covenant, and policies of Westside Baptist Church. After they have had an opportunity to read these documents, the Pastor and Deacons or just the Pastor shall meet with them at their convenience and give them opportunity to give their testimony of their salvation experience and to ask any questions they might have about this church. At the next regular meeting of the church, the congregation shall then vote on receiving them into the membership. Upon acceptance, the person shall then be welcomed into the membership of the church by being offered the right hand of fellowship.

A. Baptism

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a change in heart and accepting the views of faith and practice adopted by this church may upon baptism by immersion be received into its membership.

B. Letter and Testimony

Letter of recommendation along with the personal testimony of salvation and baptism may receive any member from some other church of like faith and practice.

C. Statement of Christian Experience

Any person who has been born-again by faith in Jesus Christ and has been baptized by immersion in a church of like faith and practice and has no regular letter of recommendation may be received on the strength of the statement of their Christian experience and baptism.

D. Restoration

Members of this church from whom the hand of fellowship has been withdrawn may be restored upon their demonstration of true repentance and good intentions.

Section 2 – Dismissal of Members

A. Letter

A member, upon the request of another church of like faith and practice, may be dismissed to the fellowship of that church by letter of recommendation.

B. Erasure

A member uniting with a church other than one of like faith and practice may be dismissed by their request and their name shall be removed from the membership of the church. A member uniting with any other church without notifying this church is automatically removed from the membership of this church.

C. Exclusion

A member may be removed upon failing to respond to Scriptural discipline.

D. Death

E. Inactivity

When a member is absent for three months without sufficient reason, he/she shall lose voice in church business. When a member is absent six months without sufficient reason, he/she shall be dropped from the church roll. In the meantime, it shall be the responsibility of the Pastor and Deacons to make every effort to bring about reconciliation. No letter will be granted until they are reconciled.

F. Non-conformity

A member or candidate for membership in this church shall forfeit his/her right as a member by failing to submit to doctrine, policies, or covenant of this church.

Section 3 – Voting

Members eighteen (18) years old or over shall be eligible to vote on all matters of business which are legally and properly presented in any business meeting. Except as otherwise specified, a majority vote of all members present and voting shall be required for the passage of any motion, resolution, or transaction of any business. A quorum is 15% of the active membership. (voting age)

Article V. – Officers and Duties

Section 1 – Officers

The elective officers of this church shall be the Pastor, Deacons, Trustees, Church Treasurer, Church Clerk and Sunday School Superintendent. Qualifications of all officers and teachers, whether elected or appointed, must be in accord with the Scriptures; that is, they are to be sound in doctrine, blameless in conduct, mature, of good reputation and faithfully support the church and the church officers. All nominations shall be subject to the approval of the Pastor.

Section 2 – Election and Duties

A. Pastor

The Pastor shall be chosen by at least 2/3-majority vote of the members present and voting at the business meeting called for this purpose, and he shall be chosen from candidates recommended by the Pulpit Committee. A ¾-majority vote of those members present and voting shall be required to dismiss a pastor. The Pastor, when called, shall be for an indefinite period. The terms of the call given to the Pastor will be recommended to the congregation by the Deacons for congregational vote of approval.

The **duties of the Pastor** shall be...

- To regularly preach the Word of God so as to feed God's people and to make known the way of salvation to the Lost.
- To conduct the worship services of the church
- To administer the ordinances
- To supervise the teaching ministry of the church
- To faithfully perform the pastoral duties among the members and prospects
- To act as moderator of the church
- To represent the church at any time such representation is advisable
 - He shall oversee all of the ministries of the church. He shall be responsible for the pulpit and the supply of it. The Pastor is an ex-officio member of all committees.

B. Deacon

There shall be as many deacons as the pastor deems necessary. The Board of Deacons shall nominate candidates for the position of deacon in this church. The Board of Deacons shall act as a nominating committee and nominees shall be presented to the congregation in the form of a posted notice on the bulletin board of the church for one month before the elections. The congregation may write in additional nominations on the posted notice and the Pastor and the Board of Deacons will consider these nominees. The additional nominees' names will be added to the final ballot provided they meet the requirements for the office. All nominations shall be subject to approval of the Pastor. They shall be elected by a majority vote of the members present and shall serve a three-year term beginning with their installation of the first Sunday in January. Deacons shall only be elected after being tried, proved and found to be qualified and worthy.

The **responsibilities** of the Deacons shall be...

- To counsel together with the Pastor
- To share vision
- To pray to help discern God's will
- To follow and support the Pastor
- To help promote harmony among God's people
- In cases of church discipline, they shall assist the Pastor in administration
- They shall assist in the serving of communion and in the baptismal services
- It shall also be their responsibility to assist the Pastor in meeting with candidates for membership in the church when the Pastor deems it necessary.

The Deacons shall be full, participating and voting members of the Board of Trustees.

C. Trustee

There shall be as many trustees elected as are necessary. They are elected by the same manner as the deacons. They shall take office on the first Sunday in January and shall serve a three-year term. Trustees shall have authority to maintain property, by repairs, improvements, etc., and may spend up to \$20,000.00 without consulting the congregation.

D. Church Treasurer

The congregation shall elect the church treasurer to a three-year term. The church treasurer shall see that funds are rightly dispersed, bills are paid, an accurate record is kept of all finances, and financial reports are given periodically.

E. Church Clerk

The congregation shall elect the church clerk to a three-year term. The church clerk shall keep minutes of all church meetings of the congregation for business purposes. These shall be posted on the bulletin board and a copy kept for permanent record. The church clerk shall also take information on all who make decisions or who come forward for membership in the church including church letters.

F. Sunday School Superintendent

The congregation shall elect the superintendent to a one-year term. The superintendent shall work closely with the Pastor to oversee the Christian Education ministry of the church in Sunday school and shall see that teachers are provided, records kept, a Sunday school curriculum followed and order maintained. It shall also be his responsibility to keep the Pastor informed as to the progress and growth of the Sunday school. He shall see that Sunday school growth incentives are provided and that special emphasis are made to increase the Sunday school growth. All methods are subject to the approval of the Pastor.

Section 3 – Other Officers and Organizations

A. All Paid Staff

All paid staff members shall be prayerful choices of the Pastor. He, as overseer reserves scriptural right to remove anyone from any position who is not in harmony with the Scriptures and Christian love, or who is failing to do an adequate job for the good of the saints. ~ I Peter 5:5; Hebrews 13:17 and I Tim. 3:5 ~

B. All Officers and Programs

All choices of officers and programs will be subject to the Pastor’s approval that is to watch over the souls of the flock. The Pastor will appoint all other officers not designated here. ~ Hebrews 13:1 ~

Article VI – Meetings

Section 1 – For Worship

- A. The stated regular meetings of the church for public worship shall be Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening, as well as any other time the Pastor and the Board of Deacons may deem advisable.
- B. The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper shall be commemorated on the first Sunday of each month in the evening service and at such other times as the Pastor and the Board of Deacons deems advisable.

Section 2 – For Business

- A. Congregational meetings shall be called by the Pastor, as they are needed. Acts chapters 1 and 6.
- B. Congregational meetings shall be prayerful and in accord with scripture and Christian love, as all assemblies of saints should be.
- C. Congregational meetings shall be announced in at least two regularly scheduled public meetings prior to the date.

Article VII – Ownership of Properties

Section 1 – Ownership

For the sake of maintaining a sound, fundamental and uncompromising testimony, in the event that a faction should arise in the church which did not agree with the doctrinal position, covenant, stand and/or policy of Westside Baptist Church, the property of the church along with all assets and holdings shall remain with those who maintain the doctrines, covenant, stand and policy upheld by this document.

Section 2 – Dissolution of Organization

For the sake of preserving a testimony, or in the event that the time should ever come that the members (and especially the elected leaders) cannot find a pastor with sufficient courage to stand up for the doctrinal position and the policies of the church, the members are authorized to dissolve the organization and to dispose of the property. All money received from the sale of the property will go to spread the Gospel through similar organizations, mission works, etc., with the same evangelistic and doctrinal emphasis as that of Westside Baptist Church and that is also qualified for exemption under Sec. 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code. This is not a provision for failure, but a precaution against the flood of apostasy and greedy men who will increase, as the time grows closer to the end.

By-Laws

- 1. Any member of the church, 18 years or older shall be entitled to vote on all matters.
- 2. All business of the church shall be opened and closed with prayer.
- 3. The purchase or sale of property, loans, erection of new structures, or all major changes shall be by the consent of the congregation.
- 4. This constitution and by-laws may be altered, suspended, or amended at any business meeting of the church by 2/3 majority of the members present and voting.