

CONSTITUTION  
of the  
WESTWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH  
of FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

Instituted April \_\_\_\_, 2015

**THE PREAMBLE**

Resting our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, and believing in the teachings of the Holy Bible as the inerrant, inspired Word of the living God both verbally and in every part, we have affiliated ourselves with one another as a body of immersed believers, and we adopt this constitution as a declaration of our convictions so that we may carry on the Lord's work decently and in order. We enter into a fellowship which asks all of its members to seek by every means possible to encourage one another to love and good deeds, to bear one another's burdens, to personally grow in our knowledge of and commitment to the Word of God, and to actively encourage unbelievers to come to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time we commit ourselves to assist one another in obeying the command of God to guard against doctrinal and moral apostasy and against allowing worldliness or spiritual indifference to characterize our lives, attitudes, or values.

**ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of this non-profit corporation shall be **WESTWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH of Fresno, California**, INC., and is located in the city of Fresno, California.

**ARTICLE II - PURPOSE STATEMENT  
(And Amplification of Purpose)**

Westwood Baptist Church of Fresno, California is a community of believers committed to maturing and multiplying authentic followers of Jesus Christ through the **EXALTATION** of God, the **EDIFICATION** of fellow believers, and the **EVANGELISM** of unbelievers to Jesus Christ.

More specifically, our purpose is to glorify God by: conducting a Baptist church in accordance with the Word of God, the Statement of Belief, the Covenant and the Constitution of this local church, promoting genuine worship of our God, edifying believers, teaching the whole counsel of God, administering the ordinances and Biblical discipline, seeking to win the lost to Christ through personal witnessing and the preaching of the Gospel, carrying on a vigorous missionary program around the world, establishing other Baptist churches, defending the faith, and maintaining a good testimony through Christ in our community by Godliness and good works.

**ARTICLE III - ASSOCIATIONS**

This church shall be an independent, autonomous church, subject only to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. It has the right to cooperate and associate with other Biblical groups on a voluntary basis.

In events in which there could be any indication of approval or fostering of their false doctrines, there shall be no cooperation with any group that permits the presence of apostates or apostasy, or that endorses groups that permit the presence of apostates or apostasy.

This church shall fellowship with the California Association of Regular Baptist Churches and with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches as long as these groups are characterized by Biblical convictions and adherence to the fundamentals of the historic Christian faith. If either of these groups forsakes its present Biblical position, this church shall take appropriate action to withdraw from its fellowship.

## **ARTICLE IV - STATEMENT OF BELIEF**

### **A. THE SCRIPTURES**

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally written were God-breathed, both verbally and in every part. We believe God, Who is Truth, communicated through Spirit-controlled men so that the Scriptures are without error and therefore authoritative in all they teach and in all matters they touch. We believe the Bible is the supreme revelation of God's will for man and constitutes the only infallible guide for faith and life.

Matthew 5:18; 15:4,5,6; Mark 12:36; John 10:34,35; Acts 1:16; Romans 3:1-4; Galatians 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:18,19

### **B. THE TRINITY**

We believe there is one, and only one, true and living God; that there is indivisible unity in the Godhead, yet existing in three separate persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - equal in every divine perfection and of the same essence, yet executing distinct, but harmonious offices in the great work of both creation and redemption.

Matthew 28:19; 3:16-17; John 6:27; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 1:9-14; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:6; Hebrews 1:8

### **C. GOD THE FATHER**

We believe God, the Father, is a Spirit - infinite eternal and unchangeable in all of His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of the universe and Giver of all life in sovereign authority over all His created beings, the Keeper over the nation of Israel, and the Father and Disciplinarian of His chosen in Jesus Christ.

Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 46:9; Romans 11:33; Revelation 19:6.

### **D. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary as no other man ever was nor can be born of a woman. He is very God of very God, being "God manifest in the flesh". He lived a life of absolute sinlessness and in His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins, dying not as a martyr, but as a voluntary substitute in the sinner's place. He rose bodily from the dead on the third day and ascended into Heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the father as our High Priest, interceding and preparing a place for us. He shall appear in the air to rapture born again believers and, after seven years, shall come again with the saints to set up the throne of David and establish His millennial kingdom.

Matthew 1:18-25; 28:6; John 1:1; 14:3; 20:27; Acts 15:16; 1 Corinthians 15:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; II Thessalonians 2:6-8; Hebrews 7:25; 8:6; 12:2; 1 Peter 2:22; 3:18; 1 John 2:1; Revelation 3:21.

## **E. THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person possessing all the attributes of personality and of deity. He is God just as much as the Father and the Son. His relation to the unbelieving world is that He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. He is the agent of the new birth, and His work among believers includes His sealing, indwelling, infilling, guiding, and teaching them the ways of righteousness. He will glorify the Son. A post-Old Testament era function of the Holy Spirit is to baptize believers into the body of Christ. This baptism is not to be confused with the false teachings of the charismatic movement which would equate the baptism with "speaking in tongues". We believe that the sign gifts (Matthew 10:8; Mark 16:17-18) and the revelatory gifts (1 Corinthians 13:8-10) were temporary and are no longer given by the Holy Spirit. John 7:39; 14:16, 17, 26; John 16:14; Acts 1:5; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.

## **F. CREATION**

We believe the Genesis account of creation as being neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of the Trinity without any evolutionary process. Genesis 1:27; Psalm 33:9; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2.

## **G. MAN**

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created by a direct act of God and not from any previously existing form of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. By voluntary transgression, man fell from his sinless state, in consequence of which all men are now sinners by nature and by choice, utterly devoid of the holiness required by God's law, positively inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal judgment and everlasting existence separated from God without defense or excuse - until such time as salvation through faith occurs. (See next paragraph for specifics.) Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23; 5:12-19.

## **H. SALVATION**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christ died for the whole world and that salvation of sinners is divinely initiated, wholly of grace, and accomplished only through the mediatorial work of the Son of God. It is wholly apart from works and is upon the sole condition of placing one's faith for salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ as one yields his/her life to God's control. This never occurs apart from genuine repentance from sin. The believer who has exercised personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is completely justified and in possession of eternal life which is eternally secure.

John 1:11-12, 3:3-6 & 16, 10:28-29; Acts 13:39, 16:31; Romans 10:13; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 5:24;  
1 John 5:11-13.

## **I. THE CHURCH**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the church of Jesus Christ began at Pentecost and will be completed at the rapture. The church must be considered in two aspects: the local church and the "Church which is His body".

The "Church which is His body" is composed of all born again believers of this age and that Christ is the only head of that church. (Colossians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23)

Local churches are organized manifestations of the universal church which are characterized by the following Scriptural distinctives:

- B - Believers' Baptism by immersion
- A - The Autonomy of the local church

- P - The Priesthood of the believer
- T - Two officers: Pastor (elder, bishop) and Deacon
- I - Individual soul liberty
- S - Sole authority of the Scriptures for faith and practice
- T - Two symbolic ordinances - baptism and the Lord's Supper
- S - Separation of church and state

Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4, 41,42; 10:44-45; 11:15-16; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; Titus 1; Hebrews 12:23.

## **J. BAPTISM AND COMMUNION**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The act of baptism does not save a person; it is an act of obedience to the Scriptures which enables the believer to declare his/her identification with the crucified, buried, risen Savior, thus illustrating the believer's death to sin and his resurrection to a new life. It is a prerequisite to membership in the local church.

Romans 6:1-5; Matthew 28:19-20.

We believe that Communion (Lord's Supper) is a symbolic ordinance, picturing Christ's body broken for our sins and His blood shed for our redemption. It is not a saving ordinance, but helps us remember His death, and inspires us while looking forward to His coming. It is to be observed only by regenerate (born again) believers and only after a solemn self-examination and (if relevant) confession of known sin.

1 Corinthians 11:23-28.

## **K. COMING EVENTS**

### **1. The Righteous and the Wicked**

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between spiritual condition of the righteous and the wicked as well as in their ultimate eternal ends. All who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in the sight of God considered wicked, under the curse of sin, and destined for a place separated from God and existing in a place of eternal torment. Those who come to a right relationship with God through repentance from sin and genuine faith in God enjoy the everlasting happiness of living in the presence of God in Heaven.

Genesis 18:23; Proverbs 14:21; Malachi 3:18; John 8:21; Matthew 25:34-41; Romans 6:17-18; and 1 John 5:19.

### **2. The Rapture of the Church**

We believe in the "Blessed Hope", the personal, imminent, pre-tribulational, and pre-millennial - appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ to rapture His redeemed ones of the church.

1 Corinthians 15:50-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2; Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:19.

### **3. The Judgment Seat of Christ**

We believe that every saved person of the Church Age will appear before the "Judgment Seat" to be judged by the Lord in regard to his service and receive rewards according to his works. Matthew 6:2;

Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

### **4. The Millennial Kingdom**

We believe that Christ will return to earth after the tribulation with His saints to establish the Millennial Kingdom which literally will be on earth and will be ruled by Christ from the throne of David.

Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29-30; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-12; Revelation 20:1-6, 12-14.

### **5. The Eternal State**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire. The souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and new body are reunited to be forever glorified with the Lord. The souls of the unbelievers after death remain in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with spirit, soul, and body reunited they shall appear before the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment.

Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19-26; John 5:28-29; 2 Corinthians 5:8-10; Philippians 1:23.

### **L. ISRAEL**

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be re-gathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ.

### **M. ANGELS**

We believe in the personal existence of angels who were created by God to bring honor and glory to His name and to serve Him. Those angels who maintained their allegiance and obedience to God continue to minister on behalf of them who are God's children by salvation. Another group of angels chose to become loyal to Satan rather than God and are now functioning as Satan's servants and as fellow "rulers of darkness", to be resisted by the born again believer through the spiritual armor provided by God.

Isaiah 6; Matthew 17:18; Ephesians 6:11-12; Colossians 1:16; 1 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 1:14; 1 Peter 1:12; Jude 6.

### **N. SATAN**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that there is a personal devil, a created angel who, through pride, became the enemy of his Creator, who is "the god of this age" and "the prince of the power of the air", who is full of all subtlety, who seeks continually to frustrate the purposes of God and to ensnare the sons of men, and who was conquered by Christ on the cross and condemned to everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire.

Isaiah 14:12-15; Luke 10:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 11:13-15; Ephesians 2:2; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 12:9

### **O. THE LORD'S DAY**

We believe that the New Testament pattern is for the first day of the week to be set aside unto the Lord for worship, fellowship with others of like faith, instruction in the Word of God, and rest from the cares of the world as a testimony both public and private. It is a day of rejoicing in the resurrection of our Lord.

### **P. MARRIAGE AND THE HOME**

We believe that the home was the first institution God provided for man, and that marriage is a sacred relationship between a man and a woman. "For this cause a **man** shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his **wife**; and they shall become one flesh." (Gen. 2:24) "What God hath joined together let no man separate." Human marriage is also a picture of the beautiful union of Christ (Biblical "male") and His church (Biblically figurative "female"). Therefore our church will only perform and acknowledge Biblical marriages – between a male and a female, and will not sanction marriages between two people of

the same birth gender. All forms of sexual expression other than in a marriage between a male and female, including but not limited to premarital sex, homosexuality, bestiality, adultery, and pornography, fall outside of the Biblical structure of marriage.

Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-31; 1 Corinthians 7:2

## **Q. CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

We believe that our civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society; those in authority are to be prayed for and conscientiously honored and obeyed - except and only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Acts 5:29; Romans 3:1-17; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; 1 Peter 2:13-18; Revelation 19:16.

## **ARTICLE V - RULES OF ORDER**

### **SECTION 1 - MEMBERSHIP**

#### ***Paragraph 1 - Reception***

Anyone professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior - giving evidence of having repented of their sins as well as a desire to be yielded to the will of God - and declaring himself/herself to be in accord with the principles, practices, and doctrines of this church, may become a candidate for membership.

Candidates may qualify for membership in one of three ways:

1. Baptism by immersion following salvation.
2. Experience: a testimony to the fact that he or she is born again, has been baptized by immersion after salvation, and is living a life which is consistent with the Statement of Belief of this church.
3. Restoration upon recommendation of the deacons, after the excluded person has given acceptable evidence of honest repentance and made full confession of wrong doing.

All persons desiring to unite with this church will meet with the “***Membership Committee***” (defined heretofore as composed of interviewers of at least two deacons of the **Fellowship of Deacons** – which, from this point, to be shortened to the **Deacons**) to affirm their spiritual relationship and walk with God and their agreement with our church's doctrine and covenants. Upon the approval of said candidates for membership by the Membership Committee, the committee shall recommend such persons for membership at the next possible Sunday service. After the motion and second to be received as members, a vote by those active voting members present shall be taken. Unbaptized candidates may not be received into membership until after baptism.

Candidates will be accepted by unanimous vote of members present and voting. Any negative vote will be given consideration by the Membership Committee. If the reason given is found to be sufficient to warrant, membership will be withheld; if not, the matter will again be presented to the church and the person(s) will be received into membership by a 3/4 majority vote. The right hand of fellowship may be presented after such confirmation of membership.

#### ***Paragraph 2 - Responsibilities***

Members should attend regularly the services of the church unless providentially hindered.

Also, members should honor those in authority in the church, pray for them, encourage them, submit to their Biblical leadership, and assist them with wholehearted cooperation.

Every member should cultivate his own Christian life and character so that the unity of the brethren might be preserved and a good testimony maintained within the community at large. Members should practice the principles contained in the Church Covenant and be willing to contribute cheerfully, as God prospers them, to the financial support of the church.

Members should volunteer to serve, as invited and directed by the church leadership - both for ministry to the church family as well as for the spread of the Gospel outside the church. This service should be with priority and with wholehearted effort.

### ***Paragraph 3 - Membership Classes***

The church will conduct regularly, according to need, classes for new members. These are highly recommended to be completed before membership approval is granted to candidates.

### ***Paragraph 4 - Removal From Membership***

**a. Removal by Letter of Transfer.** Any member in good standing may be removed by letter of transfer to the fellowship of another Baptist Church of like faith and practice upon written request of a Baptist Church.

**b. Removal by Letter of Christian Character.** A member in good standing who withdraws from this church to unite with some other denomination may, upon that church's request, be granted a letter of Christian character. His name shall then be removed from the roll.

**c. Removal by Discipline.** A member shall be subject to discipline and removal from the roll when he has failed to adhere to the doctrinal statement or covenant of the church. In such cases, the Pastors and Deacons shall attempt to deal with the member according to 2 Timothy 4:2, Ephesians 4:32, and Matthew 18:15-17, and shall make every effort to restore such a member upon his repentance.

Note: Removal of members shall be at the discretion of the Pastors and Deacons. The membership of the church shall be informed of all removals from the membership at the next regularly scheduled "business" meeting.

### ***Paragraph 5 - Rights***

All active members in good standing above the age of 18 shall have the right to vote.

Members of this church have no property rights and upon termination of membership and shall be entitled to no interest in the assets.

***Paragraph 6 - Watchcare Fellowship.*** Watchcare Fellowship is provided for students of like faith residing temporarily in our city. Students who come under the Watchcare Fellowship enjoy all privileges of membership with the exception of voting. Application is the same as for regular membership. Watchcare Fellowship shall be terminated upon six months absence from services.

***Paragraph 7 – Inactive Membership.*** A member who is no longer actively attending this church for

a period of one (1) year shall become an inactive member. Such members include: delinquent members (see next paragraph) and any member who no longer resides in the area of this church but who wishes to remain a part of this church. This latter category of inactive membership is designed primarily for those who plan to return to this area in the future (e.g. Students or military personnel) and for others who wish to maintain a close connection with this church despite not being able to attend or participate (e.g. missionaries from this church). Inactive members are not allowed to vote on church business. An inactive member shall be reinstated as an active member upon recommendation from the pastor and Fellowship of Deacons and the approval of this church.

7a – Delinquent members: Any person who shows a lack of interest in this church, continues in non-attendance or non-support for a period of one year, shall upon the recommendation of the pastor(s) and deacons be placed on the inactive membership roll. Each case shall be considered individually by the Deacons.

## **SECTION 2 - OFFICERS**

### ***Paragraph 1 - Elected and Appointed Officers***

- a. The elected officers of this church will be the pastors and deacons.
- b. The appointed officers of this church will be the Clerk, church Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Superintendent of the Family Bible Hour (Sunday School ). These appointments will be offered by the pastors and deacons and approved by a simple majority "YES" or "NO" vote on the ballot at the Annual Progress Meeting. New appointed offices may be instituted by the pastors and deacons as deemed necessary. All officers will assume office the following Sunday after the Annual Progress Meeting - unless special circumstances require more immediate assumption.

All officers are expected to live exemplary lives for Christ - being of unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Word of God, dedicated and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the spiritual welfare of this church, and faithful in attendance of services and progress meetings. For special qualifications of elected officers see Sections 3 and 4 (Pastors and Deacons).

### ***Paragraph 2 - Retention of Records***

The records of all officers are considered to be church property to be maintained in good order. These records are to be given to the succeeding officers as soon as practical for safekeeping in a prudent place.

### ***Paragraph 3 - Dismissal of Officers***

Any officer unable or unwilling to fulfill the duties of his office should resign from office. If any officer refuses to subscribe to the Statement of Belief, Covenant, or Rules of Order for this church, it will be the just cause for his removal from office. Appointed officers may be removed from office by the pastors and deacons.

## **SECTION 3 - PASTORS**

***Paragraph 1 - Qualifications.*** The pastors of this church shall fit the qualifications as indicated in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 (also see Prov. 31:4-5). As stated in 1 Timothy (3:2-4) the pastor must be a male; and for our church at least 21 years of age. A member of a secret society may not be a pastor.

***Paragraph 2 - Election and Dismissal.*** The pastoral office shall be regarded as a divine appoint-

ment and it should not be lightly filled or rudely severed. The pastor shall be chosen by the membership as hereinafter provided, but should not be considered an "employee" of the membership; rather, as God's chosen "servant leader" for them.

- a. The Pastors (if any on staff at the time) and Deacons along with a maximum of three other members from the congregation (selected by Pastors and Deacons) will form the PULPIT COMMITTEE. The PULPIT COMMITTEE shall be careful in their evaluation of prospective candidates, doing effective background and secondary referencing before extending an invitation to formally candidate.
- b. Upon the unanimous agreement (by the PULPIT COMMITTEE) to invite a man to candidate as pastor, he shall be given thorough membership exposure to allow the members to ask questions, become acquainted personally, and to better perceive how this might or might not be God's man for the hour and for the position. To avoid confusion and a mere "beauty contest", only one candidate shall be considered at one time.
- c. A pastor shall be selected by the membership in a "business" session for which announcement has been made by a public reading of notice at two preceding Sunday morning services, or each member shall be notified by mail at least seven days prior to the election. The recommendation of the PULPIT COMMITTEE to call the man as pastor must be approved by at least 3/4 of the qualified members present and voting, before a call can be formally extended to the candidate. [Thirty percent (30%) of the qualified voters shall constitute a quorum at this election.]
- d. The pastor will be elected for an indeterminate term.
- e. The pastor will give the church not less than thirty days' notice of his intention to discontinue as pastor. The church will give the pastor not less than sixty days' notice of dismissal. Dismissal of the pastor will be by vote of the church at a special meeting called for that purpose which will have been read from the pulpit on two successive Sunday mornings immediately preceding the date of the meeting. A majority vote of the qualified church members present and voting will be required for dismissal. (Quorum = 30%) If it is not deemed wise by the church for the pastor to continue his duties, he may be released with two month's pay, except in a case of immorality in which he could be dismissed immediately without pay.

### ***Paragraph 3 - Responsibilities***

#### **a. Senior Pastor.**

1. The senior Pastor's responsibilities are, according to the Scriptures, the giving of himself to prayer, the ministry of the Word, the observance of the ordinances, the pastoral oversight of the flock, and the administration over the spiritual welfare of the church.
2. In addition to his usual pastoral duties, the Senior Pastor shall be moderator of all business meetings of the church and of the Deacons. He shall be ex officio member of all organized groups and committees connected with the church. He shall have the privilege of requesting that meetings of the Deacons or committees shall be called when so needed.
3. Personnel of the church shall be under the supervision of the Senior Pastor, either directly or indirectly through other leadership. He shall, in consultation with other leadership, be responsible for final determinations in hiring, dismissing, and

management of all personnel, except the hiring and dismissing of other pastors.

**b. Pastors Other Than the Senior Pastor.**

1. The duties of these Pastors are the giving of themselves to prayer, the observance of the ordinances, the ministry of the Word in the area of their specific responsibilities (such as Christian Education, visitation, music, counseling, etc.) They shall be ex officio members of all organized groups and committees.
2. In the temporary absence of the Senior Pastor, another pastor or the chairman of the deacon board shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor to be the moderator of all progress meetings of the church and the deacons. In the permanent absence of the Senior Pastor, the Deacons may appoint another pastor to serve as Interim Senior Pastor until another Senior Pastor is called.

***Paragraph 4 - Compensation***

The pastor's compensation will be reviewed by the deacons annually and a recommendation submitted as part of the church budget prior to the Annual Church Progress Meeting.

***Paragraph 5 - Vacation***

The pastor is to have an annual vacation, the time and extent to be agreed upon by the pastors and deacons. Not to be considered in his vacation time are the annual national and area fellowship meetings which all pastors are highly encouraged to attend when expedient - and preferably at the church's expense.

**SECTION 4 – DEACONS**

***Paragraph 1 - Qualifications and Eligibility***

1. All Deacons must subscribe to and believe in the doctrinal statement and covenant of this church which is to be reaffirmed annually.
2. No member shall hold more than one elected or one appointed office of the church at one time.
3. Deacons shall be elected to three-year terms arranged to end alternately. A man may be elected to multiple, consecutive terms as deacon; but it is “encouraged” that after each two terms of three years each, the deacon allow one year to lapse before being elected to another three year term.
4. All deacons must be 21 years of age or older.
5. A Deacon must be a member for at least one year prior to nomination.
6. As qualified men become available for the position of deacon, it is desired that there always be a minimum of at least three deacons on the deacon board.
7. Biblical qualifications of Deacons are found in Acts 6:1-6 & 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

***Paragraph 2 - Nomination of Deacons***

The membership may submit any suggested nominees to the Deacons at least 30 days prior to the annual election. The Deacons shall then consider the qualifications, secure consent from nominees, and prepare a slate of candidates. The Deacons shall post a list and have published in the church bulletin the names of the nominees at least two weeks prior to the election of officers meeting.

***Paragraph 3 - Election of Deacons***

1. At the Annual Progress Meeting each January the election of Deacons shall be held along with other elections and appointments. The desired number of Deacons is one Deacon per fifteen member families. More Deacons are allowed to be elected as qualified men are available and desired by the membership. Terms of office shall begin one week after election at the annual progress (business) meeting.
2. Deacons shall be confirmed by a 2/3 majority "Yes" vote.

***Paragraph 4 - Discipline of Deacons***

Any Deacon whose conduct is such that it might bring reproach upon the church or who fails to administer his office in a reasonable manner (I Tim. 3:1-13 and Titus 1:7-9) shall be removed from office by the recommendation of the Deacons and a majority vote of the church quorum present at such meeting.

***Paragraph 5 - Vacancies***

If qualified men are available from which to choose, Deacons' positions which become vacant for whatever reasons may be filled for the remainder of the current year by appointment by the Deacons and approved by the membership at a specially called meeting (announced one Sunday in advance). A simple majority vote of approval vs. rejection is all that is required.

***Paragraph 6 - Responsibilities of Deacons (Trustees)***

1. The Deacons shall assist the Pastors in the administration and spiritual welfare of the church, subject to the final authority of the members.
2. The Deacons will serve as trustees of this church, representing this corporation as its agent. The trustees will not have authority to sell, lease, give away or dispose of in any manner church property to exceed \$ 2,500 in value, nor to mortgage or encumber the same with debts to exceed the above amount, except by a vote of the church membership.
3. The trustees are to be responsible for preparing and submitting a proposed annual budget to the church. This proposed budget will be made available to the congregation in January and be voted upon by the membership at the Annual Progress Meeting. The Pastors and Deacons will be responsible for operating the church within the approved budget. They may, if desirable, present revised budgets at any time throughout the year. The authorization of any expense over \$ 2,500 not included in the approved budget will require church action.

***Paragraph 7 - Meetings of Deacons***

1. The Deacons shall conduct monthly meetings for the purpose of prayer, consideration of the welfare of the church, and for discussion of any business which shall come before them.
2. At the first monthly meeting following their election to office shall elect from within their numbers a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary. In the absence of the Pastors, it shall be the duty of the Chairman of the Deacons to preside at all meetings of the Deacons. The Secretary shall make and keep on public file a copy of the minutes of each Deacons' meeting.
3. A special meeting of the Deacons may be called at the discretion of the Senior Pastor, the Chairman, or by request of at least 2 other deacons.

4. A majority of the Deacons shall constitute a quorum.

## **SECTION 5 - OTHER OFFICERS**

### ***Paragraph 1 - Qualification and Eligibility***

1. All appointed officers of the church must subscribe to and believe in the doctrinal statement and covenant of this church which is to be reaffirmed annually.
2. No member shall hold more than one elected or one appointed church office at one time.
3. At the conclusion of three consecutive terms of service, one year must elapse before a member can be appointed for another term to the same office – except by special affirmation vote of the congregation.
4. All officers must be 21 years of age or older

### ***Paragraph 2 - Church Clerk***

For a term of one year, the Clerk shall keep an accurate and permanent record of all the progress (business) meetings of the church, keep records of baptism, and maintain a membership register in which shall be noted such changes as occur. The Clerk shall be prepared to read the minutes of all recent progress (business) meetings.

### ***Paragraph 3 - Treasurer***

For a term of one year, the Treasurer shall keep a clear, accurate and permanent record of all regular receipts and disbursements except those handled by the Financial Secretary. The Treasurer shall disburse only when authorized. He/she shall present quarterly and annual reports to the church.

### ***Paragraph 4 - Financial Secretary***

For a term of one year, the Financial Secretary shall maintain an accurate record of all monies, keep a confidential record of tithes and offerings, and issue annual receipts to donors. He/she shall report to the Treasurer the amount of offerings.

### ***Paragraph 5 - Superintendent of the Family Bible Hour (Sunday School)***

For a term of one year, the Superintendent of the Family Bible Hour will be appointed to have general supervision over the Family Bible Hour, and its teachers and staff. He will appoint all teachers and staff, subject to the approval of the Education Committee and Deacons. He will order or supervise the ordering of all Sunday School materials and will be the lead contact person if Sunday School contests or competitions are entered into by the church. Teacher training and accountability also fall under his/her administration.

### ***Paragraph 6 - Discipline and Vacancies of Non-Deacon Offices***

1. Any officer other than a Deacon whose conduct is such that it might bring reproach upon the church or who fails to administer his office in a reasonable way shall be removed from office by the Deacons.
2. Vacancies of any office other than Deacons shall be filled for the unexpired term by appointment of the Deacons and approved by the membership at a specially called business meeting.

## **SECTION 6 - NON-OFFICER POSITIONS**

***Paragraph 1*** - The *Head Usher* shall be appointed by the Pastors and Deacons for a one-year term

and shall be responsible for coordination of worship service usher schedules and for the filling of unexpected absences of scheduled ushers. He shall be expected to provide instructions and training of ushers to assure that worshippers are able to be seated and assisted to maximize their (worshippers') worship experience and to minimize distractions to other worshippers. (See ushers' manual for specifics.)

**Paragraph 2 - The Nursery Chairman** shall be appointed by the Pastors and Deacons for a one-year term and shall be responsible for the coordination and scheduling of nursery workers for all general services of the church - except as determined by Pastors and Deacons to be unnecessary. The chairman shall make certain that schedules are received and that attendants are willing and able to be present. Chairman shall also make certain that an adult is always scheduled to be in the nursery whenever childcare is being made available.

**Paragraph 3 - Other Non-Officer Positions May Be Created By the Pastors and Deacons as Deemed Necessary**

## SECTION 7 - COMMITTEES

**Paragraph 1 -** The Pastors and Deacons shall appoint members annually to such committees as are needed to effectively carry out the purpose of the church. The membership shall be informed of church committee appointments at the Annual Progress Meeting. All committees shall be willing to provide monthly informational reports if so requested by the Pastors and Deacons.

**Paragraph 2 - Necessary Annual Committees (in Alphabetical Order) (See handbook for others.)**

**1. Missions Committee** - Shall be responsible for the missions awareness and involvement of the church family. Among other things, the committee is encouraged to plan and promote missions conferences, secure speakers, and make recommendations for missionaries to consider for support financially as missions monies are available.

(See Westwood Baptist Church "Missions Handbook" for other details.)

**2. Music Committee** - Shall be responsible for coordinating musicians for both congregational singing leadership and accompaniment as well as the ministry of music "specials". They shall also select and order music for large group special presentations and coordinate rehearsal schedules for such.

**3. Outreach Committee** - Shall consist of persons who have a genuine burden for and are committed to reaching unbelievers with the Gospel of Jesus Christ's salvation. These persons shall seek to

assist

the Pastor(s) in encouraging all to consider how they might be involved in fulfilling God's Great Commission to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. They shall also be accountable with the Pastoral staff to see that visitors receive a follow-up visit by our church family. They shall seek to recruit others to be trained and enabled to share the Gospel effectively. If an Outreach Pastor is placed on staff, this committee shall be subject to his leadership.

**4. Prayer Committee** - Shall consist of persons who are deeply committed to the power and necessity of genuine and humble prayer. They shall work with the Pastor(s) to coordinate meaningful prayer times for the church family apart from the normal worship services; they shall

organize Sunday morning pre-service prayer groups to bathe each Lord's Day's activities in praise and prayer; and shall work to enlist and encourage folks to be people characterized by faith and prayer on a daily basis. They shall seek to create and maintain an effectively functioning prayer chain for special, immediate prayer needs. They shall be willing to encourage special times of prayer and fasting among the church family as deemed essential.

**5. Grounds Committee** – should consist of not less than 3 persons. It shall be in charge of maintaining the appearance and upkeep of the building and grounds of the church. Purchasing limits for necessary equipment, seed, fertilizers, replacement parts, etc. shall be as noted in the “Legal Transactions” section (below).

## SECTION 7 - LEGAL TRANSACTIONS

**Paragraph 1** - "Legal transactions not requiring membership approval" shall be defined as:

- a. The purchasing and selling of non-real estate assets necessary for the ordinary operation of the church up to, but not to exceed two thousand five hundred (\$2,500) dollars.
  1. These transactions may be enacted either by:
    - a) Approved annual budgetary items
    - b) Recommendation of the Deacon board and Pastor(s)
- b. Transactions above \$2,500 which are not previously approved at the Annual Progress (Business) Meeting require the approval of a simple majority of a voting quorum (30% of eligible voting membership).
- c. All real estate transactions require a 2/3 majority vote of a 30% quorum for approval.

## SECTION 8 - VOTING AND PROGRESS MEETING SPECIFICS

**Paragraph 1** - Robert's Rules of Order shall be an example of appropriate parliamentary procedure for church "progress meetings" of the church. However, the church shall be governed first and foremost by the spirit of the Scriptures and the constitution of the church.

### **Paragraph 2 - Voting.**

- a. All elections of Pastors, Deacons, approval of annual budgetary items and appointed offices shall be by secret ballot. All other voting at any called or special meeting of the church shall be conducted by voice or visible vote unless a secret ballot is requested by a member.
- b. **Absentee ballots** will be furnished upon request of members for all elections of Deacons and specifically announced business - if absence is unavoidable. The request for such ballot must be made to the church clerk by the Sunday prior to the progress (business) meeting, and the sealed ballot in the clerk's hand prior to the vote.
- c. **Voting age** shall be **18 years** of age for all voting matters.

### **Paragraph 3 - Fiscal Year & Progress Meetings**

- a. The business year shall be the calendar year beginning January 1st through December 31st.
- b. **Progress meetings** (what are referred to by some churches as business meetings) shall be held whenever deemed necessary by the Pastors and Deacons. However an annual progress meeting must be held in mid to late January to adopt the new year's budget, determine

missions giving, and to elect and confirm new office holders.

Voting matters on both the prospective budgetary items and office holders shall be posted in a public place not less than two Sundays prior to the annual progress meeting.

#### **SECTION 9 - AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

**Paragraph 1** - No organizations shall be formed or considered a part of the church activities before its sponsors have submitted their plans to the Pastors and/or Deacons for sanction, and approval has been granted.

Officers of all organizations including organized classes and regular Sunday School teachers shall be members of the church.

#### **SECTION 10 - DISPOSITION OF CHURCH PROPERTY**

**Paragraph 1** - This church shall have the right to own, buy, or sell tangible properties, both real and personal, in its own name and through properly elected officers, when authorized by **2/3** majority vote of the church. No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any individuals from the assets, holdings or other transactions in which this corporation may become involved.

**Paragraph 2** - In case of division of the church membership, all church property and assets shall remain with the church property; and assets shall remain with the church membership that abide by this constitution. In case of dissolution, all assets shall be given to a tax exempt organization adhering to the purpose, covenant, and doctrinal statement of this church.

#### **SECTION 11 - AMENDMENTS**

**Paragraph 1** - This Constitution may be amended at any business meeting of the church by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members voting on the amendment, provided that written notice of the proposed amendment has been given to the members seven (7) days prior, or the proposed amendments have been read at services on two consecutive Sunday mornings.