

WESTSIDE
BAPTIST CHURCH
BYLAWS



Preamble

Since it has pleased Almighty God to gather us together in the Name of His Son and by the power of His Spirit, we, the members of Westside Baptist Church, desiring to secure the principles of the faith once delivered to the saints, to govern ourselves according to the principles of Scripture, and to do all things in love, do hereby adopt these Bylaws as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and articulated in the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this church.

Article 1—The Name of Our Church

1.1 This body of believers will be known as the Westside Fundamental Baptist Church of Bremerton Washington.

Article 2—The Purpose of Our Church

2.1 The purpose of our church is to be a faithful manifestation of the One, Holy, and Universal Church of Jesus Christ. As the body of Christ on earth we have been given the responsibility to reflect his glory (Ephesians 3:21) and to carry out his mission (Matthew 28:18–20).

2.2 This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, including but not limited to:

- Corporately worshiping the triune God (John 4:23–24) and establishing and overseeing places in which to do so;
- Proclaiming the good news of the Gospel both at home and abroad (Acts 1:8);
- Giving ourselves to a lifestyle of constant prayer, both individually and corporately (1 Thessalonians 5:17);
- Equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12) by the preaching and teaching of the whole counsel of God as found in the Holy Scriptures (Acts 20:20, 26–28);
- Administering the ordinances of baptism (Matthew 28:19) and the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19–20);
- Demonstrating the reality of Christ's work in our lives by our deep and genuine love for one another (John 13:34–35);
- Pursuing the unity and holiness of our congregation through formative (1 Thessalonians 5:14) and corrective (Matthew 18:15–20) church discipline;

- Training up, licensing, and ordaining faithful leaders to serve Christ as ministers of the Gospel in places near and far (2 Timothy 2:2);
- Showing the love of God through charitable benevolence and practical service in our local community (1 Thessalonians 5:15).

Pursuant to accomplishing these purposes, we engage in those activities which are necessary, suitable, or convenient for their accomplishment, or which are incidental thereto or connected therewith.

Article 3—The Membership of Our Church

Section 1—Introduction

3.1 Desiring to pursue practical obedience to the “one-another” commands found throughout the New Testament (Romans 15:7; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13; Hebrews 3:13; etc.), we practice mutual accountability by covenanting together as the members of one body (1 Corinthians 12:27). Throughout this document, the term “congregation” refers to these covenanted members only.

Section 2—Admission to Membership

3.2.1 At least two pastors will meet with each candidate for membership and confirm that, so far as they are able to judge according to the Scriptures, the candidate has indeed understood and obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ and shows credible evidence of genuine regeneration (2 Corinthians 5:17). All candidates for membership will also be required to make a public profession of faith before the congregation.

3.2.2 Believer’s baptism—which we define as immersion in water in the name of the Triune God upon personal and public profession of faith for the purpose of uniting with one of Christ’s churches—is required of all candidates for membership.

3.2.3 It will be the responsibility of the pastors to determine if applicants for membership have already received this baptism. Those who have never been baptized, or whose baptism does not meet the qualifications expressed above, will be baptized on the Lord’s Day service at which they present themselves for membership by publicly professing their faith before the congregation.

3.2.4 A full and joyful acceptance of our Church Covenant and Statement of Faith is required of all membership candidates.

3.2.5 To be admitted into church membership, candidates shall be recommended by the pastors. The current membership shall be informed of the names of candidates at least one week in advance of the service at

which they will be presented to the congregation. Members who intend to object to a candidate are required to share their concerns with the pastors during this time. The candidates may then be accepted by vote of the members present at any regular Lord's Day service. At that point, new members shall relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3—Duties and Privileges of Membership

3.3.1 In accordance with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those who are members of this congregation may be allowed to serve in the ministries of the church.

3.3.2 Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and to vote on the election of all church officers, on all decisions regarding membership, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote. All decisions regarding: expenditures exceeding \$25,000; the purchase of property; indebtedness that extends beyond the period of one year; or amendments to the Church Covenant, Statement of Faith or Bylaws are explicitly reserved to the membership.

Section 4—Watchcare Membership

3.4.1 Persons temporarily residing in the Bremerton area who are members of a church of like faith and practice may apply for watchcare membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. The pastors are required to determine whether or not the home church of the candidate for watchcare membership is biblically sound and of like faith and practice and to confirm that the candidate is a member in good standing of it.

3.4.2 Duties and privileges of watchcare members are the same as for other members except that, while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings, they will not be eligible to stand for any office or to vote.

3.4.3 Termination of watchcare membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the pastors shall notify the leadership of the home church of that termination. Watchcare membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in the Bremerton area.

Section 5—Cessation of Membership

3.5.1 When a member of the church dies, his or her name shall be removed from the membership of the church.

3.5.2 Members in good standing may, upon their request, be dismissed from membership to join together in membership with another body of believers. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

3.5.3 Any member who has failed to attend the regular services of our church for a period of six months (unless physically unable to do so) will be considered delinquent and will be automatically ineligible for any of the privileges of membership. Members who have become delinquent will be presented by the pastors and formally removed from membership by a confirmatory vote of the membership at the next regularly scheduled members' meeting.

3.5.4 Members may also be removed by a disciplinary vote of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members, following the process outlined in 3.6.

Section 6—Discipline

3.6.1 Formative discipline is inherent in the preaching, teaching, and exercise of other ministries in the church. When formative discipline is deliberately rejected, corrective discipline becomes necessary.

3.6.2 Corrective discipline is for the preservation of the reputation of Jesus Christ, the protection of the congregation, and the salvation and holiness of the member receiving the discipline.

3.6.3 Members who sinfully depart from the standard of conduct set forth in our Church Covenant or who stubbornly turn from the form of teaching found in our Statement of Faith shall be subject to the admonition of the pastors and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–20 and the example of Scripture. Corrective discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Corrective discipline can include admonition by the pastors or congregation, removal from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15–20; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5).

3.6.4 The purpose of corrective discipline shall be: for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Matthew 18:15–20; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1); for the instruction

in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (1 Corinthians 5:11; 1 Timothy 5:20; Hebrews 10:24–25); for the purity of the church as a whole (1 Corinthians 5:6–7; Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 21:2); for the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Matthew 5:13–16; John 13:34–35; Acts 5:10–14); and supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (Deuteronomy 5:11; John 15:8; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:12).

3.6.5 The offending member will first be lovingly and privately admonished by another church member. If this initial step fails to secure repentance and restoration, the admonishing member will then notify the pastors. This member, along with at least one pastor, will together lovingly and privately admonish the offending member. At the discretion of the pastors, the offending member may be required to step aside from ministry within the church at this or any subsequent step in the process.

3.6.6 Those who continue to reject exhortation and who persist in their sin and error are to be called to repentance by the pastors collectively.

3.6.7 If these steps fail to secure repentance and restoration, the pastors will, after much prayer, make the situation known to the congregation at the next members' meeting. The entire church membership will be encouraged to plead with the offending member for repentance and restoration, and the offending member will be put on probation, having all membership privileges, including voting rights and access to the Lord's Supper, temporarily revoked. If, in due time, the offending member repents publicly and makes any necessary restitution, he or she will be wholeheartedly forgiven and fully restored to membership in good standing. Return to previous positions of service and ministry is not guaranteed.

3.6.8 If, in due time, these processes do not result in public repentance and restoration, the pastors will present to the congregation a motion to remove the offending member from church membership by a disciplinary vote of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

3.6.9 Should the offending former member, after his or her removal, publicly repent and make any necessary restitution, he or she may re-join the church by recommendation of the pastors followed by a three-quarters majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the members.

Article 4—The Leadership of Our Church

Section 1—Introduction

4.1.1 Jesus Christ is the Lord and head of this church and He rules primarily through the Holy Scriptures, which are therefore our final and fully sufficient authority on all matters of faith and practice.

4.1.2 The biblical offices in the church are pastors (the terms “pastors,” “shepherds,” “elders” and “overseers/bishops” are used interchangeably in Scripture and refer to the same biblical office) and deacons, but the church is ultimately governed by the congregation as they seek to follow Christ through the guidance of the Spirit. The pastors shall serve as the board of directors of this corporation.

4.1.3 All officers, with the sole exception of staff pastors called from outside the congregation, must have been members of this church for at least one year prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 2—Pastors

4.2.1 The pastors shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of pastor set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. Only men may serve as pastors in accordance with 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:2. Should circumstances arise that leave the church with fewer than three pastors, the remaining pastors shall act as soon as possible to propose qualified pastors to the congregation.

4.2.2 In order to encourage the biblically mandated development of leaders within the church, every effort should be made to ensure that at least one-third of the pastors are drawn from the congregation and receive no financial compensation from the church. Those pastors who receive financial compensation from the church will be referred to as “staff pastors” for the purposes of these Bylaws, although biblically and functionally there is no difference among the pastors. No pastor shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

4.2.3 Subject to the will of the congregation, the pastors shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6 and 1 Peter 5:1–4, the pastors shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word, and shepherding God’s flock.

4.2.4 The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws on elections (4.6–4.7). These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as pastors by the vote of the church and the laying on of hands of the current pastors.

4.2.5 In order to fulfill their God-given responsibility to equip the membership for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11–12), the pastors shall take care to: examine and instruct prospective members; examine and oversee nominations of all prospective candidates for offices and positions; oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and teams; conduct worship services; administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error; ensure and maintain accountability among themselves; oversee the process of church discipline; and mobilize the church for world missions. The pastors are to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

4.2.6 All decisions not explicitly reserved to the congregation or otherwise provided for in these Bylaws are to be made by the pastors. While the pastors are encouraged to operate by consensus, if consensus cannot be achieved, decisions are to be made by at least a two-thirds majority of the current pastors. If such a majority cannot be achieved, decision making is to be postponed if at all possible. If a decision must be made and a two-thirds majority cannot be achieved, the matter must be brought before the congregation.

4.2.7 A pastor's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Resigning pastors who have served faithfully are to receive a public commendation for their service from the remaining pastors and may subsequently return to the office of pastor by the process outlined in 4.6.

4.2.8 A pastor may be dismissed on the grounds of sinful conduct, unscriptural teaching, or inability or unwillingness to carry out the functions of his office. Any member with reason to believe that a pastor should be dismissed for one of these reasons should express such concern to the other pastors. If, and only if, the pastors refuse to investigate and address this concern is this member to express the concern to the deacons. If, and only if, the deacons refuse to investigate and address this concern is this member to follow the procedure outlined in 5.2.3 to bring the matter to the attention of the congregation. No accusation unsupported by either substantial evidence or two witnesses (1 Timothy 5:17–21) will be the basis for a vote of dismissal.

4.2.9 Pastors may only be dismissed by vote of the congregation. This vote is to be held at a special business meeting at which no other business shall be conducted. This meeting shall be announced to the congregation on at least two occasions and at least two weeks in advance. Upon a negative vote of a simple majority of those members present and voting at

this meeting, the term of office of the pastor being voted on will end. The vote is to be held by paper ballot and shall be tallied by those deacons who receive no financial compensation from the church.

Section 3—Preaching Pastor

4.3.1 The preaching pastor shall perform the duties of a pastor as described above. While the preaching pastor is identical in office and authority to the other pastors, he shall be recognized by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at any regular or appropriately called special members' meeting as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching the Word of God, and he will take primary responsibility for leading the church through his pulpit ministry.

4.3.2 For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Washington, the preaching pastor shall serve as the president of the corporation, the chairman of the board of directors and the moderator of members' meetings. The legally required offices of vice-president, secretary (the duties of which may be delegated as necessary and appropriate) and treasurer (the duties of which may be delegated as necessary and appropriate) shall be filled from among the other pastors by mutual agreement of the pastors.

4.3.3 In the absence or incapacity of a preaching pastor, the other pastors shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

Section 4—Deacons

4.4.1 The church shall recognize, in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws on elections, men who meet the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8–13, who are giving of themselves in service to the church, who possess gifts of ministry, and who are called to further service and care for the church's members. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially.

4.4.2 The number of deacons shall be determined by the pastors according to the needs of the ministry and the call and qualifications of men in the church. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons.

4.4.3 Deacons' responsibilities will include: caring for the temporal needs of members; attending to the accommodations for public worship; reviewing the church budget; overseeing and maintaining the church building and property; assisting the pastors with the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; and disbursing funds for benevolence.

There shall be a written policy providing guidelines for the disbursement to individuals or organizations of funds for benevolence.

4.4.4 A deacon may be removed from his office by resignation or dismissal by vote of the congregation for sinful conduct, unscriptural teaching, or inability or unwillingness to carry out the functions of his office. Resigning deacons who have served faithfully are to receive a public commendation for their service from the pastors and may subsequently return to the office of deacon by the process outlined in 4.6.

Section 5—Church Staff

4.5.1 The pastors may establish and oversee ministry positions and committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The pastors shall also have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. The outworking of this responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to deacons or another staff member. A paid staff or volunteer ministry position does not, in and of itself, constitute any office in the church.

4.5.2 In proposing new paid ministerial staff positions (those whose responsibilities have any significant overlap with the responsibilities of the pastors as detailed in 4.2.3 and 4.2.5), the pastors shall present a job description for each position to the membership. The membership must approve by vote all candidates to fill such positions and all changes to the job descriptions of paid ministerial staff. The dismissal of paid ministerial staff by the pastors must be confirmed by the vote of the membership.

4.5.3 The pastors may hire and fire non-ministerial staff (those whose responsibilities do not have any significant overlap with the responsibilities of the pastors as detailed above). They will report job descriptions, hiring decisions, and firing decisions regarding non-ministerial staff to the membership at the next meeting of the members after such decisions have been made.

4.5.4 The compensation of all paid staff is to be reviewed at least annually. Staff pastors may make recommendations, however, all final salary determinations are to be made by those pastors and deacons who receive no compensation from the church. The recommendations resulting from a majority vote of these pastors and deacons are to be ratified without alteration by the pastors as a whole, as they legally constitute the board of directors.

Section 6—Election of Current Members to Church Office

4.6.1 The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried

out to fulfill the following principles: substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, shall be an integral part of the election process; all candidates for church office shall be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members; the election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4.6.2 The election of officers shall be held as needed in a members' meeting of the church. While the pastors are encouraged to seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process, nominations shall proceed only at the determination of the current pastors.

4.6.3 Nominees shall be presented by the pastors and made known to the church at least two weeks prior to voting. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the pastors. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the pastors as far in advance as possible before the church members' meeting at which the members will vote on the candidate. Upon an affirmative vote of three-quarters of the members present and voting, the nominee shall enter into the office for which he was nominated.

Section 7—Election of Staff Pastors from Outside the Congregation

4.7.1 In the calling of any man to a staff pastor position who is not currently a member of the church, the same basic process of calling a pastor must be followed. The pastors shall nominate a staff pastor candidate to the congregation, after which the church shall be given adequate opportunity to assess the gifts and spiritual life of the potential staff pastor.

4.7.2 In selecting a staff pastor who is not a current member of the church, the biblical qualifications for all pastors (4.2.1) will be prerequisite. The ability to preach will be assessed with particular care when selecting a potential preaching pastor. In addition, the church shall receive assurance from the pastors that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. The pastors shall bring only one recommendation to the church at a time.

4.7.3 Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as a staff pastor shall be given at two Sunday morning services prior to the vote at a members' meeting. The call of a staff pastor from outside the congregation shall take place at a members' meeting set aside

for that purpose. The extension of a call shall be made upon an affirmative vote of three-quarters of the members present and voting, upon which he shall be a member of the church and a staff pastor, whom the church shall publicly recognize as such.

Article 5—The Meetings of Our Church

Section 1—Worship Meetings

5.1.1 Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

5.1.2 The translation of Scripture used for worship services shall not be changed without a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at any regular or appropriately called special members' meeting. While references to various translations of the original in the course of interpretation are appropriate, all pulpit readings of Scripture, including those by visiting speakers, are to be taken from the translation chosen by the membership. The King James Version is the translation currently used in our worship services.

Section 2—Members' Meetings

5.2.1 In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5.2.2 There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every quarter, at some time acceptable to the membership. The pastors shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

5.2.3 Special members' meetings may be called as requested by the pastors, or at the written request, submitted to the pastors, of one tenth of the voting membership. In the event of a written request from the members, the pastors shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

5.2.4 There shall be an annual members' meeting, at which, normally, officers are elected, positions filled, and an annual financial report submitted to the membership.

5.2.5 The preaching pastor shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. In the absence or incapacity of the preaching pastor, another pastor appointed by the pastors shall perform these duties. The date, time, and purpose of any regular or special meeting shall be

announced at the public services of the church for at least two weeks preceding the meeting.

5.2.6 In the event of a genuine emergency that requires the involvement of the congregation, meetings may be called by the pastors without such notice, provided they do not deal with any matter requiring a vote by paper ballot (see 4.2.9 and 5.2.7). At the request of one tenth of the membership, any decision made at such an emergency meeting must be brought up for a confirmatory vote at a special business meeting scheduled in the regular manner.

5.2.7 On any matter that is brought to vote, a two-thirds majority is needed for it to pass, unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws. Provided all the provisions of these Bylaws for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be constituted by those members present for any matter that does not require a paper ballot. For matters requiring a paper ballot, a quorum shall be constituted by the presence of at least one half of the voting members in good standing. Abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. Only votes cast by members present at the time of the meeting will be counted. In order to vote in members' meetings, members must be 18 years of age or older and in good standing (see 3.5.3 and 3.6.7).

5.2.8 Decisions regarding: indebtedness extending over the period of one year; the sale or purchase of property; election to church office; a change of the translation used for the worship services of the church; amendments to the Church Covenant, Statement of Faith, or Bylaws; or restoration to church membership after formal excommunication, require a majority of at least three-quarters of the members present and voting. All meetings at which such matters are to be voted on must be announced at the regular services of the church for at least two weeks prior to such a vote being taken and all votes on such matters require a paper ballot, to be tallied by the deacons.

Article 6—The Policies of Our Church

Section 1—Independence of Outside Governance

6.1 This church has always been, and shall continue to be, an independent body of baptized believers. The church may fellowship and cooperate with other churches for the furtherance of the Gospel, but no rules, regulations or commitments shall be made to such bodies which call for more than voluntary action on the part of this church.

Section 2—Collection of Funds

6.2 No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of

its ministries without the approval of the pastors or deacons responsible for the church's finances.

Section 3—Missions Giving

6.3 At least one tenth of the annual budget of the church must be reserved for missions giving to individuals and organizations that are actively and primarily engaged in evangelism and church planting. The individuals and organizations to be supported by the missions giving of the church shall be recommended by the pastors, approved by the deacons, and determined by the vote of the membership. As provided for under policy establishment below, there shall be a written policy establishing guidelines for the way in which the missions giving of the church is invested.

Section 4—Policy Establishment

6.4 The pastors, at their discretion, may put in place specific written policies not otherwise provided for in this document. Once in place, these policies must be followed until they are replaced with a revised written policy. All such policies are to be made available in written form to the deacons at the next meeting of the pastors and deacons and to the membership at the next regularly scheduled members' meeting after they are enacted, modified, or reversed. The pastors are required to have detailed policies for personal accountability and to make provision for a regular job review for all staff members, including those who hold office in the church. All policies that in any way affect the compensation package or fringe benefits of staff members are to be approved by vote of the pastors and deacons who receive no financial compensation from the church.

Section 5—Private Inurement

6.5 No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the tax-exempt purposes of the church.

Section 6—Political Activities

6.6 No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on

behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

Section 7—Prohibited Activities

6.7 This church is prohibited from engaging in activities which violate its Statement of Faith (Article 7 of this document). This church is also prohibited from condoning, promoting or allowing any of its assets to be used for activities that violate this Statement of Faith.

Section 8—Indemnification

6.8.1 If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the pastors determine that the person acted: (a) in good faith; (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances; (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church; and (d) the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The church shall purchase appropriate insurance to meet these potential liabilities.

6.8.2 At the discretion of the pastors, the church also may indemnify any person who acted: (a) in good faith; (b) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church; and (c) either believed that his or her conduct was not unlawful or failed to abide by a law that the pastors determine to be in contradiction to biblical obligations.

6.8.3 If a quorum of the pastors is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of pastors seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

Section 9—Dissolution

6.9.1 The church may be dissolved or merged with another congregation by a three-quarters majority of members present and voting at a meeting called for this purpose, subsequent to at least two month's notice following the recommendation of the pastors, or a motion proposed and adopted by the congregation at any regular or appropriately called special members' meeting.

6.9.2 Upon the dissolution of the corporation, after paying and making provision for payment of all its liabilities, the corporation shall dispose of all its remaining assets to such organization(s) formed and operated

exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3), of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Assets may be distributed only to organizations that agree with the church's Statement of Faith (Article 7 of this document).

Section 10—Amendments

6.10 The Bylaws, Statement of Faith, and Church Covenant may be amended by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at a previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at worship services for two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

Article 7—The Statement of Faith of Our Church

Section 1—Church Covenant

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

7.1.2 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.

7.1.3 We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; 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 all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sinful use of intoxicating substances, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

7.1.4 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 feelings and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rule of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

7.1.5 We moreover, engage that when we remove 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.

Section 2—Of The Scriptures

7.2.1 We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired; that it has truth without any admixture of error for its matter; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

7.2.2 By "The Holy Bible" we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written, does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but IS the very Word of God.

7.2.3 By "inspiration" we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.

*2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:19–21; Acts 1:16, 28:25; Psalm 119:160, 119:130;
Luke 24:25–27; John 17:17; Luke 24:44–45; Psalm 119:89; Proverbs 30:5–6; Romans 3:4;
1 Peter 1:23; Revelation 22:19; John 12:48; Isaiah 8:20; Ephesians 6:17; Romans 15:4;
Luke 16:31; Psalm 19:7–11; John 5:45–47, 5:39*

Section 3—Of the True God

7.3 We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

*Exodus 20:2–3; Genesis 17:1; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; John 4:24;
Psalm 147:5, 83:18, 90:2; Jeremiah 10:10; Exodus 15:11; Revelation 4:11; 1 Timothy 1:17;
Romans 11:33; Mark 12:30; Matthew 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Corinthians 12:4–6; 1 John 5:7;
John 10:30, 17:5; 1 Corinthians 2:10–11; Philippians 2:5–6; Ephesians 2:18;
2 Corinthians 13:14*

Section 4—Of The Holy Spirit

7.4 We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person; equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains

the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of judgment and of righteousness; that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the New Birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer.

John 14:16–17; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Genesis 1:1–3; 2 Thessalonians 2:7; John 16:8–11, 15:26–27; Acts 5:30–32; John 3:5–6; Ephesians 1:13–14; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:16; Luke 24:49; John 16:13; Romans 8:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 8:26–27

Section 5—Of The Devil, Or Satan

7.5 We believe that Satan was once holy, and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels; that he is now the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world. We hold him to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power back of the present apostasy; the lord of the antichrist, and the author of all the powers of darkness—destined however to final defeat at the hands of God's own Son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

Isaiah 14:12–15; Ezekiel 28:14–17; Revelation 12:9; Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; Ephesians 2:2; John 14:30; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 4:1–3; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 14:30; Matthew 13:39; Luke 22:3–4; Revelation 12:10; 2 Corinthians 11:13–15; Mark 12:12–22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7; 1 John 2:22; Revelation 13:13–14; 2 Thessalonians 2:8–11; Revelation 19:11,16,20, 12:7–9, 20:1–3, 20:10; Matthew 25:41

Section 6—Of The Creation

7.6.1 We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was made directly and God's established law was that they should bring forth only "after their kind."

7.6.2 Since God created mankind as male and female, we believe that the only legitimate marriage is that between a biological man and a biological woman. He has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We

believe that God rejects any attempt to alter one's birth sex.

Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11; Acts 4:24; Colossians 1:16–17; Hebrews 11:3; John 1:3; Revelation 10:6; Romans 1:20; Acts 17:23–26; Jeremiah 10:12; Nehemiah 9:6; Genesis 1:26–27, 2:21–23, 1:11, 1:24; Genesis 2:24, 19:5, 13, 26:8–9; Leviticus 18:1–30; Romans 1:26–29; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8; Hebrews 13:4; Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22–23

Section 7—Of The Fall of Man

7.7 We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but of choice; and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

Genesis 3:1–6,24; Romans 5:12, 5:19, 3:10–19; Ephesians 2:1–3; Romans 1:18; Ezekiel 18:19–20; Romans 1:32, 1:20, 1:28; Galatians 3:22

Section 8—Of The Virgin Birth

7.8 We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner; born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of a woman, and that He is both the Son of God, and God, the Son.

Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:35; Mark 1:1; John 1:14; Psalm 2:7; Galatians 4:4; 1 John 5:20; 1 Corinthians 15:47

Section 9—Of The Atonement for Sin

7.9 We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, Who by appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that, having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

Ephesians 2:8; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24; John 3:16; Matthew 18:11; Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:14; Isaiah 53:4–7; Romans 3:25; 1 John 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18; Isaiah 53:11; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:20; Isaiah 53:12; Hebrews 9:12–15, 7:25; 1 John 2:2

Section 10—Of Grace in the New Creation

7.10 We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

*John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Luke 5:27; 1 John 5:1; John 3:6–7; Acts 2:41;
2 Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 2:13;
John 1:12–13; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9*

Section 11—Of The Freeness of Salvation

7.11 We believe in God's electing grace; that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent and obedient faith; and nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

*1 Thessalonians 1:4; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:2; Titus 1:1; Romans 8:29–30;
Matthew 11:28; Isaiah 55:1; Revelation 22:17; Romans 10:13; John 6:37; Isaiah 55:6;
Acts 2:38; Isaiah 55:7; John 3:15–16; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Corinthians 15:10;
Ephesians 2:4–5; John 5:40, 3:18, 3:36*

Section 12—Of Justification

7.12 We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed unto us.

*Acts 13:39; Isaiah 53:11; Zechariah 13:1; Romans 8:1, 5:9, 5:1; Titus 3:5–7; Romans 1:17;
Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 3:11; Romans 4:1–8; Hebrews 10:38*

Section 13—Of Repentance and Faith

7.13 We believe that Repentance and Faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned

contrition, confession and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.

Acts 20:21; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37–38; Luke 18:13; Romans 10:13; Psalm 51:1–4; Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 55:6–7; Luke 12:8; Romans 10:9–11

Section 14—Of the Church

7.14 We believe that a Baptist Church is a congregation of baptized believers associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel, said church being understood to be the citadel and propagator of the Divine and Eternal Grace; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers of ordination are pastors or elders whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the scriptures; we believe the true mission of the church is found in the Great Commission: first, to make individual disciples; second, to build up the church; third, to teach and instruct as He has commanded. We do not believe in the reversal of this order; we hold that the local church has the absolute right of self government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

Acts 2:41–42; 1 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22–23, 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:4, 8–11; Acts 14:23, 6:5–6, 15:23, 20:17–28; 1 Timothy. 3:1–3; Matthew 28:19–20; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23–24; 1 Peter 5:1–4; Acts 15:22; Jude 3–4; 2 Corinthians 8:23–24; 1 Corinthians 16:7; Malachi 3:10; Leviticus 27:32; 1 Corinthians 16:2, 6:1–3, 5:11–13

Section 15—Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

7.15 We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, with the authority of the local church, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's supper, in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and the fruit of the vine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

Acts 8:36–39; Matthew 3:6, John 3:23; Romans 6:4–5; Matthew 3:16, 28:19;

Section 16—Of the Perseverance of the Saints

7.16 We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation.

*John 8:31–32; Colossians 1:21–23; 1 John 2:19; Matthew 13:19–21; Romans 8:28;
Psalm 121:3; Hebrews 1:14; 1 Peter 1:5; Philippians 1:6; John 10:28–29; Romans 8:35–39*

Section 17—Of The Righteous and The Wicked

7.17 We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse, and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.

*Malachi 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17–18; Prov. 11:31; 1 Peter 1:18; Romans 1:17;
1 Corinthians 15:22; Acts 10:34–35; John 2:29; Romans 6:16; 1 John 5:19; Galatians 3:10;
Romans 7:6, 6:23; Proverbs 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matthew 25:34,41; John 12:25;
Matthew 7:13–14*

Section 18—Of Civil Government

7.18 We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ; who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth.

*Romans 13:7; 2 Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21–22; Acts 23:5; Matthew 22:21; Titus 3:1;
1 Peter 2:13–14, 2:17; Acts 4:19–20; Daniel 3:17–18; Matthew 10:28, 23:10;
Philippians 2:10–11, Psalm 72:11*

Section 19—Of the Resurrection and Return of Christ and Related Events

7.19 We believe in and accept the sacred Scriptures upon these subjects at their face and full value. Of the Resurrection, we believe that Christ rose bodily “The third day according to the Scriptures”; that He ascended “to the right hand of the throne of God”; that He alone is our “merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God”; “that this same Jesus

which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven,” bodily, personally, and visibly; that the “dead in Christ shall rise first”; that the living saints “shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump”; “that the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David”; and that “Christ shall reign a thousand years in righteousness until He hath put all enemies under His feet.”

Matthew 28:6–7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2–7; Acts 1:9,11; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Revelation 3:21; Hebrews 8:1, 12:2, 5:9–10; John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:42; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Corinthians 15:42–44, 51–53; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Philippians 3:20–21; Luke 1:32; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Isaiah 11:4–5; Psalm 72:8; Revelation 20:1–4, 20:6

Section 20—Of Missions

7.20 The command to give the gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and this Commission was given to the churches.

Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13–15



WESTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH