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# **Bylaws**

**Revised January 2018**

5522 Whitman Avenue

Fort Worth, Texas



# BYLAWS

## ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP

### Section A. General

The congregation of this church reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

The membership of Wedgwood Baptist Church shall be composed of persons who have given evidence of regeneration, who have been baptized by immersion, who subscribe to the constitution and bylaws of this church, and who have completed the requirement of new member orientation for church membership.

### Section B. Methods of Admission

A candidate to be considered for membership shall present him or herself for membership by one of the following:

1. Baptism – A person makes a public profession of faith in Christ and is baptized by immersion
2. Church letter of recommendation – A person presents himself or herself on a promise of a letter of recommendation from another church of like faith and order. "A church of like faith and order" refers to a church that practices believer's baptism by immersion upon one's profession of faith and holds to similar core doctrines.
3. Statement – A person who has been a member of a church of like faith and order, and in consequence of peculiar circumstances cannot obtain a church letter of recommendation, may be received into the church fellowship upon a statement satisfactory to the church.

### Section C. Privileges and Responsibilities

1. In accordance with these bylaws, every member of the church shall be entitled to vote in all elections and on all questions submitted to the church body in a duly called church business conference. Members who wish to vote on matters to be decided in church business conference but who are unable to attend because of physical infirmity, absence from the city, or employment responsibilities, may vote by registering in writing at the church office and there submitting an absentee ballot prior to the church business conference.
2. Every member shall be eligible for consideration by the membership as a candidate for all elective offices in the church and its organizations, in accordance with these bylaws.
3. Every member of the church may participate in the observance of the Lord's Supper.
4. Every member shall be encouraged to be faithful in all the responsibilities of the Christian life, to attend regularly all church services, to support financially the

church and its causes through tithes and offerings, and to share in its organized work through a commitment of time and talents.

#### **Section D. Removal or Dismissal from Membership**

A member of this church may be dismissed or removed from the roll for one of the following reasons:

1. Upon the death of the person.
2. Upon the granting of a letter when the member unites with another church of like faith.
3. Upon the member affiliating with a church from another denomination or with another religion.
4. Upon the written request of a person who does not desire to remain in the fellowship of this church.
5. Upon action of this church for disciplinary reasons.

#### **Section E. Discipline**

1. Should any grievance arise among members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-19.
2. Or should any case of gross breach of covenant or of public scandal occur, a minister shall endeavor to remove the offense, and if this effort fails, shall report the case to the congregation.
3. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but, if there is no repentance, the Elder Council should proceed to admonish the offender or declare him or her to be no longer in the membership of the church.
4. Any person whose membership has been terminated for an offense may be restored by the church upon acceptable evidence of repentance and reformation.

## **ARTICLE II. CHURCH MEETINGS**

#### **Section A. Worship Services**

The church shall meet together regularly. The Elder Council may determine days/times of such church meetings. The Lead Pastor or executive ministerial staff member may omit any regularly scheduled service or, in case of severe weather or emergency, cancel a specific service.

#### **Section B. Special Services**

Special services and any other church meeting deemed appropriate in the promotion of the objectives of the church shall be planned as a part of the life and ministry of the church.

### **Section C. Church Business Conferences**

1. Church business conferences shall be held regularly as scheduled by the ministerial staff and/or Elder Council. The Elder Council may authorize a change of the date/time of such a meeting as long as it is communicated to members at least one week prior to the regularly scheduled conference and the rescheduled conference.
2. The Lead Pastor and/or Elder Council are authorized to call additional church business conferences to consider matters of special nature or significance. A two-week notice stating the agenda must be given for these called church business conferences unless extreme urgency renders such notice impracticable. Notice must be given in such a way that all members have opportunity to know of the meeting. Only items stated in the agenda may be discussed.
3. The moderator shall be the chairman of the Elder Council, or in his absence, the vice-chairman of the Elder Council, or another designated Congregational elder.
4. A quorum consists of those who attend the church business conference.
5. Biblical principles and *Robert's Rules of Order* (latest revised edition) are the authorities for parliamentary rules of procedure for all church business conferences.

### **ARTICLE III. CONGREGATIONAL RULE**

In submission to the authority of Christ, the congregation is the final authority within this local church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of representatives (Elder Council, Deacons, Ministers)

to lead and serve the church. However, a vote of the membership of the church at a properly called church business conference, as defined in these bylaws, shall be required to effect the following:

1. Approve the call of the Lead Pastor and other ministerial staff.
2. Elect Congregational elders and deacons.
3. Discipline elders or deacons by removing them from office.
4. Dismiss the Lead Pastor from this role within the church.
5. Approve the licensing and ordaining of individuals for ministry.
6. Approve annual budgets of the church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the church resulting in a cumulative budget overrun that is greater than 2% of the approved total annual budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property.
7. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or Bylaws of this church.
8. Affirm members into the church.

9. Affirm standing committee members.
10. Approve adoption of or changes to Policies and Procedures of Elder Council and standing committees.
11. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the church, by the Elder Council, or raised by motion at a church business conference.

## **ARTICLE IV. ELDER COUNCIL**

### **Section A. General**

The Elder Council, led by the Lead Pastor, is responsible for leading the church in all matters of direction, doctrine, and discipline. The Council is responsible to oversee and evaluate the direction of all ministries and stewardship of the church. In addition to certain standing committees (see Article VIII), the Council may establish committees and other groups to assist them in any of their duties. They may delegate authority to qualified individuals or groups as they deem fit.

### **Section B. Number and Members**

The Elder Council shall consist of the executive ministerial staff as defined in the job descriptions and Congregational elders, that is, non-staff members. The number of Congregational elders shall always be at least one more than the number of members of the executive ministerial staff.

The Lead Pastor gives direction and leadership to the Elder Council but has one vote within the council.

### **Section C. Qualifications**

All Elder Council members shall be men who exhibit the qualities outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9, and 1 Peter 5:1–3.

### **Section D. Election**

1. Recommendations for Congregational elders will be confidentially submitted by church members at the appointed time. Individuals may request to be considered for a position on the Council (cf. 1 Timothy 3:1) if they meet the qualifications listed in Section C.
2. Recommendations will be examined by the existing Elder Council in order to determine if the individual meets the prescribed scriptural qualifications in Section C. Only if it is found that the individual does not meet the qualifications may the Council or Lead Pastor remove the candidate from consideration.
3. The congregation must be given a two-week notification of the recommended candidate(s) prior to a vote of affirmation.
4. The congregation will affirm the candidate(s) by a three-fourths majority of those members present at the vote held during a church business conference.

5. In the case that there are more affirmed candidates than positions available for the Elder Council, under the Spirit's guidance, the candidate(s) will be selected through impartial means (e.g. casting lots, Acts 1:21-26).

### **Section E. Officers**

The Elder Council shall have the following officers: chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. The Lead Pastor will serve as chairman. The Council will determine who serves as vice-chairman and secretary. The vice-chairman must be a Congregational elder; the secretary may be any other Elder Council member.

The secretary will also serve as the church's clerk, be responsible for recording minutes of all church business conferences and Elder Council meetings. Furthermore, the Congregational elders will serve as the church's trustees, that is, as the legal representatives of Wedgwood Baptist Church in matters approved by the congregation.

The Elder Council shall designate a member of the congregation (although not necessarily a member of the Elder Council) to serve as parliamentarian for church business conferences.

### **Section F. Term of Office**

Congregational Elders shall serve a four-year term after which they may extend their term, upon the congregation's approval, for another year or rotate off for a minimum of two years before becoming eligible to serve again.

No more than one-third of the Congregational elders may rotate off in a year.

Should an Elder Council member be unable to complete a full term, he may resign and the remaining Elder Council members may appoint a suitable successor, already affirmed by the congregation, until the resigning member's term is completed (without the chance to renew) or the Elder Council and/or church membership may recommend a replacement to fill the position based upon the procedures outlined in Section D.

### **Section G: Dismissal**

An Elder Council member may be removed if unable to fulfill the qualifications outlined in Section C or for other valid cause. A two-thirds majority vote of the Elder Council (excluding the member under consideration) may suspend the member from the Council until the congregation votes at a church business conference to retain or dismiss the member permanently from the Council. His position will remain vacant until the current Elder Council members recommend a suitable replacement as outlined in Section F.

### **Section H: Responsibilities**

The fundamental responsibility of the Elder Council is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elder Council is responsible for leading the church, safeguarding the teaching of the Word, and tending the flock of God in this church.

1. The responsibilities of the Elder Council shall include the following: examining candidates for the Council and ministerial staff, ensuring that finances are managed properly, ensuring the doctrinal integrity of the church, and overseeing personnel issues such as employment, supervision, evaluation, and dismissal. The Elder

Council exercises leadership over areas that are not specifically handled by the congregation as a whole. Procedures shall be put in place to address conflicts of interest.

2. In the absence of a Lead Pastor, the Elder Council shall ensure that someone preaches every week at all services. They shall also ensure that the church mission and ministries are kept intact and functioning, and that the attendance and finances are properly promoted while the church is without a Lead Pastor.
3. The Congregational elders are not expected to oversee specific projects or ministry areas in their capacity. The Elder Council does not determine programming. This responsibility falls to the ministerial staff.
4. Each year the Elder Council shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a regularly scheduled church business conference and called up for a vote at the following church business conference.
5. In the case that a church member disagrees with a decision of the Elder Council, he or she should first address the Council to seek resolution. If an agreement cannot be reached, a church business conference may be called by members to bring any decision of the Elder Council under review by creating a written petition, specifying the issue to be addressed, and obtaining the signatures of 100 members.

### **Section I: Meetings**

The Elder Council will meet regularly as determined by the Council. Special meetings of the Elder Council may be called only if the majority of the executive ministerial staff and the majority of the Congregational elders are available. A quorum for the transaction of business consists of one-half of the executive ministerial staff and one-half of the Congregational elders.

Consensus will be the Council's primary means of making decisions. When a consensus cannot be reached after a reasonable time, then a three-fourths majority is required (except for matters expressly outlined elsewhere in these bylaws).

## **ARTICLE V: CHURCH STAFF**

### **Section A. General**

The church shall call or employ such staff as the church may authorize. The Elder Council shall be responsible for preparing a job description for each staff member.

### **Section B. Lead Pastor**

Christ is the head over His body, the church, and is Chief Shepherd of the flock. We believe that men are called and led by the Holy Spirit to be pastors of local churches. Such pastors are undershepherds and overseers of the local church, who teach and apply God's Word in order to nourish, strengthen, and guide the flock as it follows its Lord.

1. Qualifications

The Lead Pastor must exhibit the qualities outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9, and 1 Peter 5:1–3.

## 2. Responsibilities

The Lead Pastor leads the church in the ministry of the Word, in preserving the sanctity of the congregation, in caring for the needs of the church, and in directing the church's ministry of outreach.

## 3. Pastor Selection Procedure

- a. The Elder Council shall initiate the process to conduct the search in such a way that represents a wide spectrum of the congregation (e.g. a search committee).
- b. The Council's recommendation will constitute a nomination in a church business conference called for the purpose of calling the Lead Pastor, with at least one week's notice communicated to the members of the congregation. The election shall take place by secret ballot. An affirmative vote of ninety percent of the members voting shall be necessary to issue a call. Should the one recommended by the Council fail to receive a ninety percent vote, the Council will initiate the process again to seek out another candidate for Lead Pastor.

## 4. Release from Service

The Lead Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period. He shall serve until he is released from this relationship either by his resignation or at the church's request.

### a. Resignation or Retirement

The Lead Pastor may resign from his duty to the church, giving at least two weeks' notice before terminating responsibilities.

### b. Church-initiated release

The church should view releasing the Lead Pastor only as a last resort after every attempt to reconcile differences has been made. The Elder Council shall be responsible to see that the spirit of this bylaw is followed. The Elder Council must make a recommendation to release the Lead Pastor to the church in writing two weeks prior to a vote in a church business conference. During this time, the Council may also suspend the Lead Pastor from serving on the Council (see Article III, Section G). A simple majority of a secret ballot of the congregation is required to release the Lead Pastor from his service to the church.

## **Section C. Ministerial Staff (full-time and part-time members)**

The ministerial staff is to serve with the Lead Pastor in the function of the church. The ministerial staff is not to replace the work of individual church members, but is to facilitate and give guidance to their work.

## 1. Requirements

The Elder Council shall be responsible for identifying the church's staff needs in order to determine the number and responsibilities of ministerial staff positions.

## 2. Selection Procedure

- a. The calling of a ministerial staff member shall be accomplished in the same manner as prescribed for calling a Lead Pastor. The Elder Council shall be responsible for presenting a suitable candidate before the congregation for a congregational vote. The Council shall initiate the process to conduct the search in such a way that represents a wide spectrum of the congregation.

- b. The Council's recommendation will constitute a nomination in a church business conference, with at least one week's notice communicated to the members of the congregation. The election shall take place by secret ballot. An affirmative vote of three-fourths majority of the members voting shall be necessary to issue a call. Should the one recommended by the Council fail to receive a three-fourths majority vote, the Council will initiate the process again to seek out another candidate for the position.

### 3. Release from Service

The ministerial staff member shall serve until released from service either by his/her resignation or upon being released of his/her duties.

- a. The ministerial staff member shall give at least two weeks' notice at the time of resignation before terminating responsibilities.
- b. The release of a ministerial staff member shall occur when a two-thirds majority of the Elder Council (excluding the staff member, if the member serves as part of the council) votes to do so.

### **Section D. Support Staff (Permanent or Interim)**

The Elder Council shall be responsible for identifying the church's staff needs in order to determine the number and responsibilities of support staff positions. The Elder Council is responsible for employing, overseeing, and releasing support staff.

## **ARTICLE VI. DEACONS**

### **Section A. General**

The deacons of the church are those men whom the members elect to serve as co-laborers with the Lead Pastor in implementing the church's function of ministry as caring servants of the flock.

### **Section B. Responsibilities**

In accordance with the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be faithful servants of the church. They assist the Lead Pastor in meeting the physical and spiritual needs of the congregation. They also serve the Lead Pastor as a trusted source of wisdom and advice.

### **Section C. Qualifications**

A deacon of the church must be a man of good character, spiritual maturity, and a true servant of God.

1. He must meet the qualifications for deacons listed in I Timothy 3:8-13.
2. He must have been ordained to the office of deacon by the authority of this church or another church of like faith and order or be approved by the congregation for ordination as a deacon.
3. No church ministerial staff member or active Congregational Elder will be eligible to serve concurrently as a member of the deacon body.

### **Section D. Election**

Recommendation for deacons will be confidentially submitted by church members at the appointed time. Recommendations will be taken into consideration by the existing

deacon body in a way that they see fit. If it is found that the individual does not meet the prescribed qualifications for a deacon, the deacon body or Lead Pastor has the authority to disqualify the candidate.

The congregation must be given two weeks' notification of the recommended candidate(s) prior to a vote. Each church member may vote by secret ballot on the number of persons equal to additional deacons needed. The nominees receiving the highest number of votes, if at least a majority of the votes cast, shall be elected.

If additional deacons are needed in the course of the year, the deacon body shall bring suitable candidates before the church body for consideration by secret ballot in a regular church business conference.

#### **Section E. Term of Service**

The office of deacon is a lifetime responsibility, elected by the church, as stated in these bylaws, terminated only by death or removal from office.

The deacon body and the Lead Pastor have the authority to determine the number of deacons and the terms of their active service in order to meet the church's requirements.

#### **Section F. Meetings and Officers**

The deacons shall arrange for meetings and elect such officers and committees as are necessary for the discharge of their duties. The Lead Pastor or the chairman of the deacons may call the deacons into special session whenever the need arises.

### **ARTICLE VII. LICENSE AND ORDINATION OF MINISTERS**

The Elder Council is authorized to present to the church a person to be licensed or ordained. The Council may determine the best procedure to evaluate the person's calling and preparation for the ministry to which they desire to be licensed or ordained. If the Council presents the person to the congregation as a candidate for licensure or ordination, the church may authorize licensing the person with a majority vote or ordaining the person with a two-thirds majority vote.

### **ARTICLE VIII. CHURCH COMMITTEES**

#### **Section A. General**

Church committees assist the Elder Council in providing leadership for the church. The Elder Council shall authorize such committees as are necessary to carry out its mission, in addition to the standing committees (see section B). The Elder Council shall determine the number and responsibilities of the church committees based upon the congregation's needs.

The purpose of the committees is to research, evaluate, and make recommendations to the Elder Council concerning the program, personnel, and financial needs of the church within the guidelines established by the Elder Council for their direction. Elder Council members cannot serve as members of committees.

## **Section B. Standing Committees**

The following five committees shall remain standing committees (terms of which are specified in their Policies and Procedures): Budget and Finance committee, Human Resources committee, Missions committee, Nominating committee, and Women's Advisory committee.

1. The Budget and Finance committee focuses on the preparation of the annual church budget and the disbursement of the church's funds.
2. The Human Resources committee focuses on the administration of employed personnel.
3. The Missions committee focuses on Wedgwood's missions efforts whether supporting an existing work or starting a new one, whether local, regional, national or international.
4. The Nominating committee focuses on ensuring the effective functioning of the church's committees by nominating candidates to represent the congregation in serving on church committees.
5. The Women's Advisory committee consists of the female representatives from each of the other standing committees who shall meet regularly to address women's concerns and present such concerns to the Elder Council.

## **Section C. Special Committees**

The Elder Council shall establish such ad hoc committees as shall be needed for purposes not covered by standing committees.

## **ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS**

1. Proposed amendments to these bylaws may be presented in writing by any member of Wedgwood Baptist Church to the Elder Council.
2. Recommendations for approval of proposed amendments shall be presented to the church by the Elder Council in a generally available print form.
3. A vote will be taken on any proposed amendment at a church business conference at least thirty days after it is presented to the church. An affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the members voting shall approve the amendment.