

Westport Baptist Church, inc.

*Constitution
And
By-Laws*

Westport Baptist Church, inc.
Constitution and By-Laws

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Westport Baptist Church, inc.
CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern this body in an orderly Christian manner; to preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relationship to other churches of the same faith.

ARTICLE I
NAME

This organization shall be known as the Westport Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II
THE CHURCH MISSION

The Church Mission will be to:

- 1) provide regular opportunities for public worship.
- 2) sustain the ordinances, doctrines, and ethics set forth in the New Testament.
- 3) maintain a meaningful relationship with God and fellow believers.
- 4) minister unselfishly to people in the community and world in Jesus' name.

ARTICLE III
FAITH AND COVENANT

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the basis for our beliefs. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ. We are personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind while developing a deeper personal relationship with our Heavenly Father. The ordinances of the church include the believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper.

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

~~We personally pledge, by the aid of the Holy Spirit:~~

- ~~1) To walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this — Church in knowledge, holiness and caring.~~
- ~~2) To promote its growth and spirituality, to sustain its worship, ordinances, — discipline, and doctrines; to faithfully be present, and to be dedicated in — our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior~~
- ~~3) To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the — expenses of the church, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all — nations.~~
- ~~4) We also pledge to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our — children in the Christian faith, and to seek the salvation of our family — and acquaintances.~~
- ~~5) To seek to walk correctly in the world; to be just in our dealings, to be faithful in our commitments, and to be Christian examples in our behavior. We pledge to refrain from the promotion and use of those things which harm the body or defile the mind.~~
- ~~6) We further pledge 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 and express these feelings in speech; to — be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful — of the teaching of our Savior to secure it without delay.~~
- ~~7) We also pledge that if we should leave this fellowship, 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.~~

Church Doctrine / Statement of Faith

#1: God:

We believe that God exists eternally in three equal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
(Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3, 4; II Corinthians 13:14; Revelation 1:4-6)

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#2: The Bible:

We believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired by God; inerrant in the originals; supreme in authority for faith and life. (Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:18; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20, 21)

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#3: Salvation:

We believe that God, out of love for the human race, sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to save sinners. Jesus Christ paid the full penalty for everyone's sins when He died on the cross. After His death, He was then buried and rose again from the grave on the third day, and as a result of this, any person who believes in Jesus Christ alone as his only hope of eternal life receives the gift of eternal life which once granted can never be lost. (John 3:16-18; 5:24; 6:47; 10:27-30; Romans 3:21-25; 4:5; 8:38, 39; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:1-10; I Timothy 1:15; Titus 3:3-7; Revelation 22:17)

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#4: Discipleship:

We believe the ultimate goal of the Holy Spirit's work in the believer's life is to produce spiritual maturity reflected in consistent Christ-like behavior and attitudes which God will reward in His eternal kingdom. This comes by committing our lives to the Lordship Christ, which includes daily turning from sin. (Matthew 6:19-20; 1 Corinthians 3:14; Colossians 3:24; Galatians 5:22-25; Luke 14:25-33; Colossians 1:23-29; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:11-14)

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#5: The Church:

We believe that all believers in the present age are members of the body of Christ, the universal church, united to Christ and to one another by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Believers are to gather together in local churches to devote themselves to Biblical

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teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. The purpose of the church is to develop dedicated disciples, all while giving Christ the glory He rightfully deserves.
(Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 1:2, 10:31; 11:2, 17-34; 12:12-14; 14:34-38; Hebrews 10:23-25;)

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ARTICLE IV POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership. (See Article I of the Bylaws.)

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. With regard to what is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the American Baptist Churches of Decatur County, the American Baptist Churches of Indiana/Kentucky, and the American Baptist Convention USA.

Westport Baptist Church, inc.
BYLAWS

ARTICLE I.
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

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

Section 2. Candidacy

Any person may offer ~~himself~~themselves as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

- (1) By profession of faith and baptism according to the policies of the Church.
- (2) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another ~~Baptist~~ church.
- (3) ~~By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and~~

~~—Baptism in accordance to our beliefs when no letter is obtainable.~~

Should there be any dissent or question as to any candidate for membership or baptism, such issue shall be referred to the deacons' committee for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church.

Section 3. Rights of Members

- (1) Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference.
- (2) Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church.
- (3) Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (1) death of the member,
- (2) dismissal to another Baptist church,
- (3) exclusion by action of this church, ~~or~~
- (4) erasure upon request by the member ~~or~~
- (5) ~~proof of membership in a church of another denomination~~

Section 5. Discipline

It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastor and deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a 30 day prior notice to the member and church body shall be given of the meeting. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to

be no longer in the membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

ARTICLE II. CHURCH OFFICES AND COMMITTEES

All who serve as officers of the church and those who serve on church committees shall be members of this church ~~(with the exception of the Hospitality and Decorating Committee).~~

Section 1. Church Offices

The officers of this church shall be the pastor, the deacons, a moderator, a clerk, a treasurer, and the trustees.

- (1) The pastor is a leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such he work with the deacons and church staff to:
 - (A) lead the church in the achievement of its mission,
 - (B) proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and
 - (C) care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

A pastoral selection committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. Any church member has the privilege of making other nominations. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by an

affirmative vote of three-fourths (¾) of those present. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. ~~He shall preside at meetings of this church, and if so designated, may serve as moderator in business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized in these bylaws.~~

The pastor may relinquish the office of pastor by giving at least one month's notice to the church at the time of resignation. ~~The church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice shall have been given. The moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote, and he shall be someone other than the pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be an affirmative vote of three fourths (¾) of the members present.~~

(2) The church shall elect deacons at regular business meetings of the church. Deacons shall serve on a rotating basis. ~~Each year the assigned term of office of one third of the number of deacons shall expire, and election shall be held to fill vacancies and to add to the deacons such numbers as the church size warrants. In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect a deacon to fill the unexpired term. After serving a term of three years, a deacon shall be eligible for reelection only after the lapse of at least one year. --~~ There shall be no obligation to add to the deacon body an individual who has been a deacon in another church; but in such instances as one might be chosen by this church for assignment as a deacon, his previous ordination by another church of like faith and order shall suffice for this church.

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. Their task is to serve with the pastor and staff in performing the pastoral ministry tasks of

- (A) leading the church in the achievement of its mission,
- (B) proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and
- (C) caring for the church members and other persons in the community.

(3) The church shall elect ~~annually~~ a moderator as its presiding officer. In the absence of the moderator, the assistant moderator shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.

(4) The church shall ~~annually~~ elect a clerk as its clerical officer. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the

church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismission voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the association.

(4) ~~(5)~~ The church shall ~~annually~~ elect a church treasurer as its financial officer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. The treasurer shall be bonded, the church paying for the bond. The treasurer shall also maintain the non-profit status of the church by filing documents as necessary with the state of Indiana and the federal government. Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

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(6) The church shall elect ~~five or more~~ trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, ~~or other legal documents related to church-approved matters. Trustees shall serve on a rotation basis.~~

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(7) Regular elected teachers (and assistants) of the church shall be drawn and elected ~~annually~~ from the church membership.

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Section 2. Church Committees

The church shall maintain other committees as needed to conduct the business of the church.

~~Additional committees of this church shall consist of a nominating committee, a finance committee, a pastoral relations committee, a hospitality committee, a flower committee, a decorating committee, a music committee, an ushers committee, and such other regular and special committees as the church shall authorize. All church committee members shall be recommended by the church nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise specified within these bylaws. Other committee members shall serve on a yearly basis.~~

ARTICLE III CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

The church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching, mission education, and music training. All organizations related to the church program shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all program activities subject to church coordination and approval. The church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

The Sunday School shall be the basic organization for the Bible teaching program. Its tasks shall be to teach the biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and church membership, perform the functions of the church within its constituency, provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The Sunday School shall be organized by departments and/or classes, as appropriate for all ages, and shall be conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Superintendent elected by the church. All teachers of Sunday School shall

agree with the church doctrine as written in Article III of this constitution, as well as being approved by the Sunday school superintendent, deacons, and the pastor.

~~The church music program shall have such officers and organization as the program requires.~~

~~The Women's Missionary Circle shall have such officers and organization as the program requires.~~

ARTICLE IV CHURCH COUNCIL

~~The church council shall serve the church by leading in planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating the ministries and program of the church and its organizations.~~

~~The primary functions of the church council shall be to recommend to the church suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate ministry and program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees, to recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate achievements in terms of church objectives and goals.~~

~~Regular members of the church council shall be the pastor, the chairman of deacons, the church officers and teachers, the chairman of trustees, and chairman of other church committees.~~

~~All matters agreed upon by the council which call for action not already approved shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.~~

ARTICLE IV CHURCH ORDINANCES

Section 1. Baptism

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has accepted Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

- (1) Baptism shall be by immersion in water unless candidate is incapacitated upon which appropriate action will be taken by the deacons.
- (2) The pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and the observance of, baptism.

~~(3) Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship~~

~~—service of the church.~~

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper ~~quarterly~~. The pastor and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE VI
CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The pastor shall direct the services for all the church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

Section 2. Special Services

Revival services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objectives shall be placed on the church calendar.

Section 3. Regular Business Meetings

The church shall hold regular business meetings ~~monthly on a designated Wednesday night~~.

Section 4. Special Business Meetings

The church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A one-week notice must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, the time, and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting.

Section 5. Quorum

The quorum consists of those members who attend the business meeting, provided that it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

ARTICLE VI CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1. Budget

The Finance Committee, in consultation with the Church Trustees, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses. ~~Offering envelopes will be provided for members' use.~~

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer, ~~or financial secretary,~~ and be properly recorded on the books of the church. Those who have responsibility that involves actual handling of funds shall be bonded, the church paying the bond. (See Article II, Section 1, regarding the church treasurer.)

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the finance committee.

Section 3. Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS

Changes in the constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church by a vote of three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the members present, provided that at least two weeks notice shall have been given at a regular worship service of the church.

~~Constitution~~

