Bylaws and Committee Descriptions

October, 2007
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ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP
Section 1—Qualifications

BYLAWS

Individuals who have accepted Christ as their personal Savior immediately become positional members of the universal church of Jesus Christ solely on the basis of His merit and grace. Positional membership is eternal and unchanging.

The Bible, however, urges (positional) members to continue their spiritual growth by becoming participating members in a local assembly/church body. By becoming a member of the church body at Western Oaks Baptist Church, an individual not only becomes, or continues, as a positional member in the universal church but also, becomes a participating member in the church body of Western Oaks Baptist Church.

Section 2—Western Oaks Baptist Church Membership

The membership of this church includes those individuals who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and who have obeyed Him in scriptural baptism by immersion; either on the authority of this church or another church of like faith and practice.

Individuals may be received into participating membership in Western Oaks Baptist Church upon:

a. Profess of faith in Christ, thereby becoming a positional member of Christ's church, scriptural baptism by immersion, and:

• Satisfactory Completion of a new members class taught by pastoral staff or designated lay leaders and,

• Acceptance and signing of the Church Covenant as set forth in the Constitution of Western Oaks Baptist Church, and

or
b. Receipt of a letter of recommendation from another church of like faith and practice, and:

- Satisfactory Completion of a new members class taught by pastoral staff or designated lay leaders and,

- Acceptance and signing of the Church Covenant as set forth in the Constitution of Western Oaks Baptist Church, and

or

- Presented to the church body for affirmation and celebration.

c. Acceptance of a satisfactory statement of faith by one who has previously been a member of another church of like faith and practice and in consequence of unusual circumstances has no access to a letter of transfer, and

- Satisfactory Completion of a new members class taught by pastoral staff or designated lay leaders and,

- Acceptance and signing of the Church Covenant as set forth in the Constitution of Western Oaks Baptist Church, and

- Presented to the church body for affirmation and celebration.

Section 3—Voting Members

Individuals eligible to vote on any matter presented to this church, in duly called business meetings or other specially called meetings, must:

- Be a participating member of Western Oaks Baptist church, and

- Must be 18 years of age or older.
Section 4 — Rights

Every participating member, 18 years of age or older, is entitled to speak and to vote on all matters presented to this church in duly called business meetings provided the participating member is present. Non-participating members, or participating members under the age of 18, are not eligible to vote, but may speak, on any of the official transactions of the church. Section 5 — Responsibilities Every participating member of this Church has responsibilities both as a member of Christ's church and as a member of Western Oaks Baptist Church. The responsibilities inherent in both acceptance of Christ as a personal Saviour and as a participating member of this church are consistent with scripture, biblically based, and are contained in the Church Covenant.

Section 6 — Termination of Membership

1. Membership in Western Oaks Baptist Church shall terminate:
   a. Upon the death of the member, or
   b. With the granting of this church, on proper request, a letter of transfer to another church of like faith and practice.
   c. A report of membership changes shall be provided by the Church Clerk at regularly scheduled business meetings.

2. By disaffiliation when:
   a. Affiliation in accordance with Article V—Church Government and Affiliation, of the Constitution is rejected by the member.
   b. If the member has been unable to be contacted or, if it is known that the individual/family has re-located or has become involved in another congregation.

3. A simple majority of the voting members present at a business
meeting is required to complete the disaffiliation.

Section 7—Discipline

Should any unhappy difference arise among members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the guidance provided in

Matthew 18:15-17: “If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him in private. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he won’t listen, take one or two more with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established. If he pays no attention to them, tell the church. But if he doesn’t pay attention even to the church, let him be like an unbeliever and a tax collector to you.”

Should any case of gross breach of covenant or of public scandal be alleged against a member; the pastoral staff, member(s) of the Executive Committee (or other individuals designated by pastoral staff), shall meet with that member. If it is determined that there is a cause of action, said individuals shall endeavor to remove the offense by personal discussion, prayer, spiritual discipline and guidance. If such efforts fail, the Pastors and the Executive Committee shall take the biblical steps to report the case for discipline to the church membership at a business meeting.

All such proceedings, both the individual meeting and any subsequent action at a business meeting, must be guided by the Holy Spirit and be conducted with a spirit of Christian kindness, forbearance, love, and grace. If an adverse decision is reached, the church membership may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in fellowship and membership with the church.

A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members present at a business meeting shall be required to terminate membership under this section. A person whose membership has been terminated under Section 7-Discipline, may contact pastoral staff or members of the Executive Committee to request restoration to membership. An individual may be restored to membership upon evidence of repentance and reformation and a recommendation for same is placed on a business meeting agenda by pastoral staff or a member(s) of the Executive Committee.
Restoration is accomplished, following a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members present at a business meeting during which such vote is called.

**ARTICLE II—MEETINGS/CALENDAR**

Section 1—Worship Services

This church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training, and fellowship. The Lord’s Supper shall be observed on a regular frequency of no less than once per quarter. Pastoral staff shall determine the specific date of the Lord’s Supper within the established frequency.

Section 2—Business Meetings

This church shall hold regularly scheduled business meetings. When possible, said meetings shall occur on the third Wednesday in the last month of the calendar quarter or, on a schedule as determined by the membership. Special business meetings may be called by the membership provided two (2) weeks public notice has been given prior to the called meeting. Only such matters, for which the special business meeting has been called, may be discussed.

The quorum for all business meetings is defined in Article VI of the Constitution. Article V of the constitution establishes the authority for all business meetings of this church.

Section 3—Other Meetings

All other meetings of this church and its organizations shall be set according to the needs of the church.

Section 4—Church Fiscal Year

The definition of “year” that shall be used for all church business, finances, etc. is defined as occurring between January 1 through December 31.
ARTICLE III—PASTORAL STAFF, OFFICERS AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Any individual nominated and elected by this church, as an officer must be a voting member in good standing.

Section 1—Pastoral Staff

A pastor shall be chosen and called by this church whenever a vacancy occurs. A pastoral search committee shall be called for by the Executive Committee and shall consist of at least five (5) members recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by this church. The Pastoral Search Committee shall seek out suitable pastoral candidates, based upon scriptural guidelines, for consideration by the church membership. The recommendation of the search committee will constitute a motion to the membership for consideration of the candidate. Any voting member shall have the privilege of making other nominations. The search committee shall bring to the consideration of this church only one (1) name at a time for consideration. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the voting members present shall be considered as approval of the candidate necessary for a call. Should the recommended candidate fail to receive the necessary affirmative votes, the search committee will be instructed to seek out another candidate, and the meeting shall be adjourned without debate.

All Pastors shall be called for an indefinite period of time. It is expected that all Pastors shall devote full time to this church’s ministry with such exception as may be mutually agreeable and as specified in the job descriptions for pastoral positions as applicable.

This relationship between this church and a pastor may be dissolved at the request of either of the parties. If the relationship is dissolved by the church, a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the voting members present is necessary. Regardless of the origin of the request, a public notice, at least thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled church meeting shall be
given unless the time should be shortened by mutual consent through the calling of a special business meeting.

The responsibilities for pastoral staff are defined in the individual job descriptions on file in the church office.

Other staff members shall be called as this church determines the need. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. Such staff members shall be recommended to this church by the Personnel Committee.

Section 2—Moderators

The moderator and assistant moderator of this church shall be elected annually upon recommendation of the nominating committee. In the absence of the moderator and assistant moderator, the church clerk shall call the church meeting to order and an acting moderator shall be elected. Should none of the above be in attendance, the body as a whole will select a moderator. The moderator shall operate under the guidance of the Executive Committee.

Section 3—Church Clerks

A church clerk and assistant church clerk shall be elected annually upon recommendation from the nominating committee. The clerk shall keep an accurate record of all business actions, prepare the annual associational letter, request and issue all letters of membership transfer, maintain reports, records and history of this church, and maintain an accurate roll of the membership with correct addresses and other pertinent information. The clerk’s records are the property of this church and shall be open to examination by any member at any time. Church clerks shall operate under the guidance of the Executive Committee. At regularly scheduled business meetings, the Church Clerk will provide a count of active members and a list of proposed new members and deletion of members from the church roll.

Section 4—Treasurers
The church treasurer and assistant treasurer shall serve be elected from the Finance Committee by members of the Finance Committee. The Church Treasurer shall disburse, upon proper authority, all funds contributed to this church. The treasurer shall maintain an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements and present a monthly financial report to this church for preservation by the clerk. The treasurer’s records are the property of this church and shall be open for examination by any voting member. The treasurer or assistant treasurer shall receive and deposit promptly, in an approved bank, all church contributions. The Assistant Treasurer shall also be responsible for recording all church contributions, providing each contributor with an accurate record of their gifts to this church. Contribution records shall be maintained in a confidential file for four (4) years.

Section 5—Other Officers and Organizational Leaders

Other officers and organizational leaders may be elected by this church as wisdom and need may direct, including associational board members, convention messengers, program directors and ministry leaders.

Section 6—Staff Members and Employees

All paid staff members and employees shall be guided in their duties and privileges by the personnel policy, as duly adopted by this church, and the position descriptions on file in the church office.

ARTICLE IV—COMMITTEES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL ENTITIES

Section 1—Standing Committees

The standing committees of this church shall be the:

- Nominating Committee
- Finance Committee
• Personnel Committee

• Executive Committee

• Building and Grounds Committee

• Administrative Committee

Other committees and organizational entities may be established, as this church feels necessary. All Committee members will be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church. All Committee members shall be voting members of this church in good standing. As vacancies occur, the Nominating Committee shall recommend individuals to fill such vacancies on an as needed basis. The recommendations and election of members on the Executive Committee are described within the body of the Executive Committee description and as approved by the church membership on March 21, 2007 and as thereafter amended. All Committee descriptions are on file in the church office.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is responsible to nominate suitable voting members to serve in standing committees of the church and other special committees as needed; to consult with church staff and members of other standing committees and other church members, to obtain suggested member names for nomination. The Committee shall consist of no less than five (5) members who have been affirmed by the church membership during an official business meeting. A chairperson and secretary will be elected by the committee annually. Members of this Committee shall serve a term of three (3) years with no member serving more than two (2) consecutive terms until one year has elapsed between terms. Individuals elected to fill vacancies shall serve the unexpired term of the member who is being replaced; those individuals are eligible to serve an additional term if nominated and elected.
**B—Finance Committee**

The Finance committee is responsible for all the financial affairs of the church. The Committee shall consist of at least five members who have been affirmed by the church membership during an official business meeting. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be elected by the Committee on an annual basis. Members of this Committee shall serve a term of three (3) years with no member serving more than two (2) consecutive terms until one year has elapsed between terms. Individuals elected to fill vacancies shall serve the unexpired term of the member who is being replaced; those individuals are eligible to serve an additional term if nominated and elected.

**C—Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee is responsible for determining personnel requirements, development, and maintenance of church personnel policy, assisting in the development of job descriptions, reviewing annual evaluations/reviews conducted by the Executive Committee and church supervisory staff, and providing salary recommendations/annual increases to the Finance Committee for their consideration. At least five (5) church members shall serve on this Committee affirmed by the church membership during an official business meeting. A chairperson and secretary will be elected by the committee annually. Members shall serve a term of three (3) years with no member serving more than two (2) consecutive terms until one year has elapsed between terms. Individuals elected to fill vacancies shall serve the unexpired term of the member who is being replaced; those individuals are eligible to serve an additional term if nominated and elected.

**D—Building and Grounds Committee**

The Building and Grounds Committee is responsible for the maintenance of church properties, such as buildings, grounds and equipment (other than office/computer and media/sound equipment), and systems, creation and maintenance of inventories of church equipment, and making recommendations for future needs or
improvements to existing properties. At least six (6) church members shall serve as members of this Committee. A chairperson and secretary will be elected by the committee annually. Members are affirmed by the church membership during an official business meeting. Members shall serve a term of three (3) years with no member serving more than two (2) consecutive terms until one year has elapsed between terms. Individuals elected to fill vacancies shall serve the unexpired term of the member who is being replaced; those individuals are eligible to serve an additional term if nominated and elected.

E—Executive Committee

The primary purpose of the Executive Committee of Western Oaks Baptist Church is to guard the church. Members of this Committee are the leaders who work with pastoral staff to spiritually shepherd the church, keeping it true to its God-given vision of being a church of influence and, ensuring that the church, as a corporate body, is proceeding in God’s inspired direction.

The Executive Committee shall consist of no less than seven (7) and no more than twelve (12) members; no more than two (2) pastoral staff representatives may serve on the Executive Committee at any time. Membership of, nomination and election to and terms of service for this Committee differ from all other Committee’s due to the standards for participation in this Committee, and the responsibilities of its members. The full Committee description is on file at the church office and was approved by the church membership on March 21, 2007.

F—Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee is responsible for representing the church in all legal matters, conducting the corporate business of the church and for the oversight of all standing committees and committee chairs with the exception of the Executive Committee. At least five (5) individuals, and no more than eight (8) individuals who have been affirmed by the church membership during an official business meeting shall serve on
this Committee. A chairperson and secretary will be elected by the committee annually, with the church Moderator serving as an *ex-officio* member. Members of this Committee shall serve a term of three (3) years with no member serving more than two (2) consecutive terms until one year has elapsed between terms. Individuals elected to fill vacancies shall serve the unexpired term of the member who is being replaced; those individuals are eligible to serve an additional term if nominated and elected.

**Section 2—Other Organizational Entities**

In the event that there are other areas of need that would benefit from an organized group of church members, such organizational entities may be established. Those areas may include, but are not limited to Youth Ministry Team, Missions Team, and others.

**ARTICLE V—STEWARDSHIP AND MISSIONS**

**Section 1—Promotion of Missions**

The church shall promote and practice an aggressive program of missions from its local community to the ends of the earth. Faithful stewardship of time, talents, and possessions shall be encouraged of every member. This church shall consistently support the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program, the Baptist Children’s Home and, the Capital City Baptist Association.

**Section 2—Financial Support**

The scriptural method of tithes and offerings is adopted as our only plan of church finance. This does not preclude borrowing funds to meet the needs of the church. Members shall be encouraged to tithe their income through this church on a regular basis.

**Section 3—Special Offerings**

There shall be three (3) special mission offerings throughout the year: the Lottie Moon offering for International Missions, the Annie Armstrong
offering for North American Missions, and the State Mission offering. Other special offerings may be received by this church as deemed necessary and as approved by the Finance Committee.

**ARTICLE VI—LICENSING AND ORDINATION**

Section 1—License

When a member indicates to this church a Divine call to the gospel ministry, this church, by majority vote, may license that member to the ministry. The clerk shall furnish such licensed member with a copy of the minutes or a certificate of license as a valid credential.

Section 2—Ordination

When a request has been received for the ordination of a member who has indicated a Divine call to the gospel ministry, this church shall request an ordination council (consisting of ordained personnel from this and/or other churches of like faith and practice) be formed to examine the candidate and present a recommendation to this church. Upon favorable recommendation by the council, this church may proceed with the ordination.

**ARTICLE VII—DIVISION OF MEMBERSHIP**

Should a division of membership occur because of doctrinal differences:

1. The title to and possession of all property and assets owned by this congregation shall remain with the group holding the doctrinal position common to churches of the Southern Baptist Convention.

2. An advisory council shall be made up of representatives from the Capitol City Baptist Association and/or the Illinois Baptist State Association and/or sister Southern Baptist churches.

3. Parties of the outgoing group in custody of physical properties shall immediately relinquish same to proper church officers.
4. All offices and positions held by the outgoing group shall automatically be declared vacated at the time of division.