

**CONSTITUTION
OF
WESTWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH
SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA**

PREAMBLE

We, the members of Westwood Baptist Church, Springfield, Virginia, organized on the seventh day of June, 1964, in order that the principles of our faith may be made known; that this church may govern itself in an orderly manner consistent with New Testament teachings; that the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church may be preserved; and that the freedom of action of this church in its relation to other churches of like faith may be maintained, do declare and establish this Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE I: NAME

This body shall be known as the Westwood Baptist Church of Springfield, County of Fairfax, Virginia.

ARTICLE II: AFFILIATION

This church shall be affiliated with the Mount Vernon Baptist Association, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Baptist World Alliance. The church shall also use the resources of and partner with any Baptist body or agency it deems appropriate in order to further the Gospel and strengthen the Kingdom of God on earth.

ARTICLE III: ARTICLES OF FAITH

Section 1. THE SCRIPTURES

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain, and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

Section 2. GOD

There is but one living and true God, the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of all things, infinite in all perfections, to whom we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. He is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

Section 3. MAN

Man was created by the special act of God as the crowning work of Creation, being created in God's own image as male and female, innocent of sin, and endowed with freedom of choice. Being tempted of Satan, man sinned against God and brought sin into Creation, whereby all mankind possesses a nature and environment inclined toward sin, and as soon as individuals are capable of moral action, they become actual transgressors and are under condemnation.

Section 4. THE MEDIATOR

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the divinely appointed mediator between God and man. Having taken upon Himself human nature, yet without sin, He perfectly fulfilled divine justice and made atonement for our sins by His death on the cross. He was buried, and rose from the grave, and is now

enthroned in Heaven, interceding for His people. He is the only Mediator; the Prophet, Priest, and King; and Sovereign of the Universe.

Section 5. SALVATION

Salvation involves redemption of the whole person, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

- A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace conditioned upon repentance of sin and faith in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit, producing the love and practice of righteousness.
- B. Repentance and faith are evangelical graces, wherein a person being made aware, by the Holy Spirit, of the manifold evil of his sin, humbles himself because of it, turns from it with godly sorrow and abhorrence toward God with the purpose of living so as to please Him in all things, and commits his entire personality to Him as He is revealed in Jesus Christ which leads into a life of holiness.
- C. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe on Christ, who alone has made this possible; not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but through the obedience and work of Christ.
- D. Sanctification, or growth in grace, is the process by which the regenerate progress through their lives toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them.

Section 6. GOD'S PURPOSE IN GRACE

- A. Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He calls, regenerates, and sanctifies sinners. It is consistent with the freedom of man and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.
- B. Perseverance in all true believers is the mark which distinguishes them from mere professors, in that they are kept by the power of God until final salvation.

Section 7. THE CHURCH

The Church, which is composed of all true disciples, has the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head, and in Him is invested all power for its government. According to His commandment, Christians are to associate themselves into particular societies or churches; and to each of these churches He has given needful authority for administering that order, discipline, and worship which He has appointed. The Scriptural officers of a church are Pastors and Deacons.

Section 8. BAPTISM

Scriptural Baptism is a symbolic act, obligatory upon every Christian, wherein he is immersed in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as a testimony of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ, of remission of sins, and of commitment to God to walk in newness of life. It is a prerequisite to church membership.

Section 9. LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act by which fellow Christians through partaking of the bread and the cup commemorate the death of Christ, testify to His redeeming love, and nourish their spiritual communion with Him and with the fellowship.

Section 10. THE LORD'S DAY

The Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance on the first day of the week, commemorating the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion. It should be a day of spiritual and physical rest, with the exception of works of necessity and mercy.

Section 11. STEWARDSHIP

As God is the source of all blessings and as all we have and are we owe to Him, we are under obligation to serve Him with our time, abilities, and possessions. According to the Scriptures, Christians are to give of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally to glorify God on earth.

Section 12. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from all doctrine and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no religious group should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. Churches should not resort to the civil power to carry on their work. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Section 13. THE KINGDOM

The Kingdom, or Reign, of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular reign in the lives of those who confess Him as Lord. It is both present and future, and all Christians ought to pray and to labor for God's Reign to come in full glory.

Section 14. EVANGELISM

Evangelistic or missionary effort to make disciples of all persons is expressly commanded in the teachings of Christ as the privilege and responsibility of every one who is redeemed by God's love which of necessity begets love and concern for others.

Section 15. THE SOCIAL ORDER

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society. All means employed in the establishment of social righteousness must be ultimately rooted in the regeneration of the individual by God's saving grace in Christ Jesus. The Christian should strive to oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice; to provide for the or-

phaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick; and to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Section 16. LAST THINGS

God, in his own time and in His own way, will bring this world to its appropriate end, and Jesus Christ will return in Glory and Power to judge all persons in righteousness. The unrighteous shall dwell in everlasting punishment, and the righteous shall dwell in everlasting life with their Lord.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH COVENANT

As we have been led by the Holy Spirit to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, professing our faith and receiving baptism, so we do most solemnly and joyfully before our Heavenly Father covenant with each other:

That we will walk together in Christian love;

That we will exercise Christian care and watchfulness over each other, and be faithful in prayer, both for ourselves and others;

That we will share in each other's joys, and with tenderness and sympathy bear each other's burdens and sorrows;

That we will maintain family and private devotion, commit ourselves to spiritual growth, and strive to bring up all who are or may be under our care in the teaching, discipline, and love of the Lord;

That we will seek divine strength to enable us to live uprightly and watchfully in the world, rejecting all forms of both individual and corporate ungodliness;

That we will faithfully gather together for worship and Bible Study and together support an evangelical ministry among us and throughout the world;

That we will strive by example and effort to bring others to Christ;

That if we move 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;

And through life, in both evil report and good report, seek to live to the glory of God who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

ARTICLE V: CHARACTER

Section 1. POLICY

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It recognizes no superior ecclesiastical authority, but it accepts the obligations of mutual counsel and co-operation which are common among Baptist Churches. Each member of the church shall have equal voice in determining

all matters coming before the church for action, and unless otherwise provided by the Bylaws all questions shall be determined by a majority of the votes of those present. The membership may from time to time delegate portions of its authority to specific individuals, offices, or bodies as set forth in the Bylaws, but the authority of these delegates is determined completely by the charge of the membership, and is subject to review and recall by the membership.

Section 2. DOCTRINE

This church receives the Scriptures as its objective norm in all matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truths as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of Baptist churches as indicated in the Articles of Faith herewith.

ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active resident members present at a regular church conference, or at a meeting called for that purpose. The proposed change shall be laid before the church in writing at a church conference not less than four (4) weeks prior to the time of the proposed action, and notice of the proposed change shall be published in the weekly bulletin or in a church letter at least one (1) week prior to the time of proposed action.

Approved March 10, 2002