

# CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

APPROVED June 16, 1993

Amended November 3, 1999

Amended December 13, 2009

## PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner, and for the purpose of preserving freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches, to its own members, and to its task of reaching the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ, we do declare and establish this constitution.

## ARTICLE I

### NAME

This church shall be known as Willow Bend Church, located at 5701 W. Park Blvd., Plano, TX 75093 – (“Willow Bend”) and the body of its Members shall comprise Willow Bend.

## ARTICLE II

### PURPOSE

Willow Bend’s purpose is to be used by God to be a Biblical Community that is relevant to seekers and stimulates people to live as fully devoted flowers of Christ.

## ARTICLE III

### BELIEFS

In essential beliefs – we have unity.

*“There is one Body and one Spirit...there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all...” Eph. 4:4-6*

In no-essential beliefs – we show liberty.

*“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters...who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls...So then each of us will give account of himself to God...So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.” Rom. 14:1, 4, 12, 22*

In all our beliefs – we show charity.

*“...if I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I amount to nothing at all.” 1 Cor. 13:2*

Our sole authority for faith and practice as a body of believers is the Bible. We affirm the truths and accept the Statement of Faith adopted by Willow Bend.

## ARTICLE IV

### POLICY AND RELATIONSHIPS

The government of Willow Bend shall be entrusted to its membership, staff, elders and officers. Willow Bend is not subject to the control of any ecclesiastical body. It is autonomous.

# **BY-LAWS**

## **ARTICLE I**

### **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

#### **1.1 General**

Willow Bend shall have one type of membership (“Members”). Members shall consist of all persons at least 18 years of age who have met all four qualifications for membership. Members shall also include existing Members as of the adoption of this Constitution and By-laws. Willow Bend shall regularly maintain a membership role of the Members.

#### **1.2 Qualifications**

1. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.
2. Baptism following faith in Christ
3. Completion of the Newcomers Class.
4. Personal visit with a Pastor or representative of the Membership Ministry Team.

#### **1.3 Termination of Membership**

1. Death
2. Self-request by Member
3. Evidence of Membership in another church.
4. Disciplinary termination.

#### **1.4 Rights of Members**

Every Member is entitled to be present and vote in all church elections and Business Conferences. Each Member shall be entitled to one vote. No voting by proxy shall be permitted. Members have the right to vote on the following matters: Willow Bend budget, election of officers (Elders, Senior Pastor(s), Trustees, Treasurer, and Secretary), the acquisition, sale and/or transfer of real property, increase in mortgage debt and amendments to the Statement of Faith, Constitution and By-Laws.

#### **1.5 Discipline of Members**

Members of Willow Bend who err in doctrine or conduct shall be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-18. The goal is loving restoration. If it shall become necessary for Willow Bend to take action to terminate the membership of an unrepentant Member, and upon a recommendation by the Elders and approval of the church, membership shall be terminated. Upon evidence of repentance and reformation, membership may be restored by a vote of the majority of the Elders.

*“If your brother sins against you go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two to three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses even to listen to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax*

*collector. I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matt. 18:15-18*

## **ARTICLE II**

### **2.1 Officers**

The Officers of Willow Bend shall include: Elders, Senior Pastor(s), Trustees, Treasurer, and Secretary. All offices shall be individually elected by Willow Bend to serve a one-year term beginning in January, excluding the Senior Pastor(s). The term may be consecutive or nonconsecutive. Any officer, excluding the Senior Pastor(s), may be removed from office if they become physically or mentally incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or their ability to serve is established by a majority of the Elders. When a vacancy occurs the Elders will nominate a replacement for approval by the church to fill out the remainder of the removed officer’s term in a prompt manner.

### **2.2 Elders**

In accordance with God’s plan for leadership in the church as revealed through scripture, Willow Bend shall be led by Elders. In the New Testament Elders were given responsibility for oversight of a particular body and shepherding of its members.

Qualifications: Each Elder must possess the qualifications set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. As such, Elders must demonstrate a total life-style commitment to serving Jesus Christ and possess a blend of spiritual maturity, wisdom and leadership. Because unity is critical to growth of the body of Christ, Elders must be committed to the mission and methods of Willow Bend.

*“Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband but of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.” 1 Tim. 3:1-7*

*“An elder must be blameless, the husband of one wife, and whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, and who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.” Titus 1:6-9*

Responsibilities: It is the Elders primary responsibility to provide the leadership to achieve the mission of Willow Bend through the vision cast by the Senior Pastor(s). Their primary purpose is to discern spiritual matters, establish policies and make strategic decision thereby freeing Members for ministry and minimizing maintenance. Therefore, the Elders are responsible for and can establish policies, task forces or ministries to support or otherwise delegate authority including, but not limited to:

- Spiritual Matters

- Personnel issues (within the limits of the budget)
- Business matters
- Use and maintenance of Willow Bend property
- All ministries whether standing or arising out of a recognized need

In their administration of this responsibility, the Elders will seek input from many sources, especially Members, and will carefully scrutinize candidates for leadership.

The Elders shall be composed of paid Elders and unpaid Elders. The number of Elders shall be determined each year by the elders. The Elders consist of a majority of unpaid Elders.

The Elders shall meet monthly or as needed. Elder meetings will be open for Members to attend; however, the Elders have the right to enter into a closed session if necessary. Minutes will be kept of all meetings. All decisions of the Elders will be reached by a majority at any given meeting. A quorum of two-thirds of the Elders is required for meeting and voting.

### **2.3 Senior Pastor**

The number of Senior Pastors will be determined by the Elders. Senior Pastor(s) (individually and collectively, the “Senior Pastor”)9s(/are) responsible for leading Willow Bend in accordance with the Biblical principles set forth in the New Testament. In addition to, and in support of this responsibility, he(/they) shall always be an Elder.

Whenever a vacancy occurs, the unpaid Elders shall appoint a Senior Pastor Team to seek out candidates for Senior Pastor, and make a recommendation to the Elders. Upon approval of the Elders, the Senior Pastor Search Team’s recommendation shall constitute a nomination for approval of the church. A vote shall take place at a Business Conference scheduled with at least two weeks’ notice. The election of a Senior Pastor shall be by secret ballot, with an affirmation vote of 85% of those Members present and voting. A Senior Pastor shall continue to serve until termination by his request or by decision of both a majority vote of the Elders, and two-thirds of the members of Willow Bend present and voting in a Business Conference.

### **2.4 Trustees**

The Elders shall nominate three Members who shall serve as Trustees upon approval of the church. The Trustees, acting pursuant to the approval of the church, shall be authorized to buy, sell, mortgage or transfer Willow Bend’s real property and, at the direction of the Elders, sign any legal documents on behalf of Willow Bend. The will serve at the convenience of Willow Bend and their authority is expressly limited to the functions set forth in these by-laws and as otherwise specifically authorized by the approval of the church.

### **2.5 Treasurer**

The Elders shall recommend for approval of the church one Member that will serve Willow Bend as the Treasurer. The treasurer shall be ex-officio member of the Finance Team, as designated by the Elders. The Treasurer shall provide oversight in the disbursements of Willow Bend.

### **2.6 Secretary**

The Elders shall recommend for approval of the church, one Member that will serve as the Willow Bend

Secretary. The Secretary will be responsible for keeping the official minutes of Willow Bend's Business Conferences.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **3.1 Worship**

Willow Bend shall conduct Sunday worship and other services as deemed by the Elders.

### **3.2 Business Conferences**

Willow Bend shall conduct at least one Business Conference per year. Notice of a special Business Conference must be made by written announcement one week prior to such a meeting. The Elders shall appoint the moderator of each Business Conference and establish rules of order.

### **3.3 Voting**

Unless otherwise specified herein, approval by the Church shall mean a majority vote of Members present and voting at a Business Conference which notice has been duly given shall constitute a quorum.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **MINISTERS**

Willow Bend affirms the "Priesthood of the Believers." We believe each and every believer stands equal before God and each is equipped and called to serve in such form of ministry. We equate membership with a commitment to ministry. We believe that every member is a minister. Therefore, Willow Bend wishes to create an environment that encourages, enables, empowers and authorizes the minister according to their God-given talents, passions, abilities and gifts.

The Elders shall define and regularly maintain an organized chart which delineates approved Willow Bend ministries and ministry team coordinators.

Members may begin a new ministry as long as they follow five guidelines:

1. Fund raising is not conducted, unless specifically authorized by the Elders.
2. The ministry will not harm the testimony of the Members
3. The ministry originates and leaders are in philosophical and doctrinal harmony with Willow Bend.
4. The ministry is led and maintained by Members and in cooperation and submission with other ministries and leaders.
5. The ministry is synchronous and in harmony with the Willow Bend Distinctives, as defined by the Elders.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **DISSOLUTION OF THE MEMBERSHIP AND DISCONTINUANCE**

The assets of this church are pledged for use in performing its religious functions. On discontinuance of this church by dissolution or otherwise, its assets are to be transferred to a religious organization or

charitable organization that is qualified as an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **AMENDMENTS**

The constitution and By-laws may be amended or changed by an 85% vote of the members present and voting at any business Conference where two weeks prior notice of a constitutional change has been given. The notice must be in written or electronic form, to the last known address of all Members.