

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

WYTHEVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

PREAMBLE:

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenants of a missionary Baptist church, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

ARTICLE I NAME

This body shall be known as the Wytheville Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our church, community, and throughout the world.

To be a worshiping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.

To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and Man.

To be a church that ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and world in Jesus' name.

To be a church whose purpose is to be Christ like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

ARTICLE III CHURCH POLITY

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It 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. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Highlands Association, the Baptist General Association of Virginia and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE IV STATEMENT OF FAITH AND MESSAGE

The articles of faith shall be those expressed by "The Baptist Faith and Message," a statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City, Missouri, on May 9, 1963.

ARTICLE V CHURCH COVENANT

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

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, in holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage 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 in feeling, and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove 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

BY-LAWS ARTICLE I PREVIOUS BY-LAWS

This Constitution and By-Laws automatically supersedes any previous Constitution and By-Laws now in effect in the church.

ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Voting Rights

Only members in good standing may act and vote in transactions of the church. Members must be present at meetings to vote except when absentee voting has been arranged. Absentee voting will be permitted for those confined by illness or unavoidably out of town. Absentee ballots should be sent to the moderator or tally committee.

Any vote requiring a two-thirds majority must be taken by written ballot.

Section 2. Admission to the membership shall be governed in the following manner:

- A. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a change of heart, and having accepted the statement of faith of this church may be received into membership after baptism.

- B. Members of other Baptist churches may be received as members with us by presenting letters of transfer from such churches, and accepting the statement of faith of this church.
- C. Any applicant for membership for whom the ordinance of baptism by immersion has been administered may be received upon a statement of his experience of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ prior to baptism, and after accepting the statement of faith of this church.
- D. A person requesting membership in this church will first talk with the pastor and/or a deacon. He/she then will be presented to the church during a regular worship service at which time he/she must receive a majority vote of the members present and voting.

Section 3. Transfer and dismissal from the membership shall be governed in the following manner:

- A. A letter of transfer and recommendation shall be granted, on application, to any member in good standing to join another Baptist church.
- B. A letter of dismissal shall be granted, on application, to any member wishing to join a church of another faith, or at his own disposition.
- C. Any member who has been absent for two years and has communicated in no way with the church will be placed on an inactive roll. Such a member may be restored as a member in good standing by his return to the church and an expression of renewed interest. If after a reasonable length of time and sufficient encouragement by the membership he/she continues to show no interest he/she will be subject to the discipline of the church.
- D. A member guilty of gross or persistent neglect of covenant obligations shall be considered a proper subject for discipline. In such cases it shall be the duty of the pastor and the deacons, or one or more of their number to contact such delinquent a member to ascertain the cause of the delinquency or failure to meet covenant obligations and, if in their opinion the conditions warrant church action, they shall make such reports to the church.

ARTICLE III MEETINGS AND QUORUM

Section 1. Kinds of Meetings

This church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teachings, training, prayer and fellowship.

Section 2. Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings shall be held once each month at a time agreed upon by the church and as adopted in the annual church calendar. Notice of such meetings shall be made from the pulpit and/or in the church bulletin on the Sunday before the meeting. Any regular meeting of the church shall be considered a business meeting for the reception of members, the granting of letters of dismissal and the approval of delegates to conferences, councils, conventions, or other meetings where the church should be represented and no previous notice shall be required.

The first regular business meeting following the Highland Association annual meeting will include a summary of the Annual Church Profile as submitted to the association.

In the event of inclement weather, a regular business meeting shall be held the next available Wednesday, providing a notice is made from the pulpit and/or in the church bulletin on the Sunday before the meeting.

Section 3. Special Business Meetings

Special business meetings may be called for the purpose of transacting the business of the church. These meetings may be called in one of these ways: 1) Moderator, 2) the pastor, 3) the chair of Pastoral Relations Committee, 4) the chair of deacons, 5) upon receipt of a petition signed by twenty-five (25) members of the church. Notice of such called business meeting shall be by mail and must be posted at least seven (7) days prior to the date for the special business meeting. Such notice may be included in the weekly bulletin provided that all other requirements of this section are met. The nature of the business to be transacted shall be specified in the notice.

Section 4.

All meetings for business will be subject to the guidelines of this Constitution and By-Laws and the latest edition of ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER

Section 5. Quorum

Twenty-five (25) members present and voting shall constitute a quorum for all business sessions of the church, provided requirements regarding notification of such meetings as authorized in this Constitution and By-Laws have been followed.

Section 6. Observance of Ordinances

A. Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be observed in the morning or evening worship regularly (monthly when practical) and at other times at the discretion of the pastor and deacons.

B. Baptism

Baptism shall be administered as required and according to the mode outlined in Article IV of the Church Constitution.

ARTICLE IV OFFICERS AND STAFF

Section 1. Officers

A. General Officers

The general officers of the church shall be the pastor, other staff ministers, deacons, clerk, treasurer, financial secretary and trustees. Church staff members shall be added as the church directs.

B. Organizational Officers

The organizational officers of the church shall be the Director of Sunday School, the WMU Director, and the Baptist Men and others as needed.

Section 2. Election of Officers

- A. All officers, except those hereinafter provided, shall be elected at a business meeting or at a meeting called for that purpose, at least one month prior to the time they take office. Nominees for these elections shall be those submitted by the Nominating Committee or

made from the floor at said meeting. Persons elected to office shall begin serving October 1 of each year, unless otherwise stated. All officers must be active members of the church.

- B. The trustees shall be elected by a counted vote to serve for an indefinite time at the pleasure of the church.
- C. The deacons shall consist of twelve (12) members, unless an alternate number is voted by the church body, one-third of whom shall be elected each year to serve for a period of three (3) years beginning with the new church year. They shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of one (1) year unless they are filling an unexpired term. Only those persons who have been active members of Wytheville Baptist Church for one (1) year prior to nomination will be eligible for election.

Subsequent to July 31 all nominees will be interviewed by a “special committee” comprised of the following persons: Deacons completing their third year term, Pastor, and the Chair of Deacons.

The special committee will interview all nominees to determine their willingness to serve, share expectations of deacons, and to further explain the role of deacons at Wytheville Baptist Church. A selection of two times the number of deacons rotating off will be presented to the church for election. Nominees previously ordained as deacons shall be so designated on the ballot.

- D. Vacancies in any office, except those of staff members, may be filled at any regular business meeting of the church upon nomination by the Nominating Committee and election by the church. If a vacancy should occur within the deacons, the person receiving the next highest numerical vote in the most recent election will be eligible to fill the vacancy for the unexpired portion of that term. That person will be eligible for re-election for the succeeding term. The person filling the unexpired term shall be ordained if necessary before serving.

Section 3. Staff Personnel

A. Election

The pastor shall be elected at a business meeting of the church provided that:

1. A notice of election shall have been given the preceding Sunday.
2. A letter shall have been mailed to the membership giving the qualifications, personal data of the candidate and his family and the date of election.
3. The prospective pastor has been involved in a meeting with the congregation.
4. A general discussion regarding the candidate has been held preceding the election under the direction of the pulpit committee.
5. An affirmative vote of 3/4 of the members present and voting approves the calling of a pastor.
6. The election shall be by ballot.

B. Tenure

1. The pastor shall serve for an indefinite period of time, until his resignation or church termination
2. In the event of a pastoral resignation, the pastor shall give the church a minimum of two (2) weeks and not more than thirty (30) days notice of recantation in writing before termination.

C. Termination

1. The pastor may be terminated by the congregation at a special called business meeting upon a joint recommendation by the Pastoral Relations Committee and deacons, or upon a motion from the church floor.
2. It shall be the duty of the moderator to call a special meeting of the church and preside at the meeting. Notice of such a meeting shall be given by mail to each member. If at said meeting, a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting by ballot, vote for a change of pastor, it shall be the duty of the clerk to so notify him and request his resignation to become effective immediately with three months' (3) salary and benefits provided as defined within the Pastor-Church Covenant (not including church related expenses). The pastor shall not be expected to fill the pulpit or perform pastoral ministeries during this time. Failure of the pastor to comply with the request shall constitute grounds for the Pastoral Relations Committee and the deacons to declare the office vacant.

D. The method of election and termination for full time staff members other than the pastor shall be the same as that of the pastor.

E. Other staff employees shall be elected to serve at the pleasure of the church upon recommendation of the personnel committee. Termination of such employees requires two weeks notice from either party.

ARTICLE V DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Pastor

The pastor shall conduct the public services of worship, and the general development of the church work shall be under his supervision. He/she shall be a member of all, councils, committees, and ministry teams except the Pastoral Relations Committee, in addition to the number of members hereinafter required on each committee. In the event of a planned pastoral absence the pastor shall arrange to have the pulpit filled.

Section 2. Minister of Education

The minister of education is responsible for the overall educational growth of the church. He/she is to work with and be responsible to the pastor in development of programs and activities suitable to the educational needs of the church. He/she is to work with the volunteer workers in each organization and auxiliary organization, offering assistance and training when and where needed.

Section 3. Deacons

It shall be the duty of the deacons to cooperate with the pastor in the work of the church. They are charged especially with the spiritual advancement of the church and the Pastoral care of the church members. They shall distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper. They shall present to the church all cases of discipline where church action is necessary. In the event of an unplanned pastoral absence or during a pastoral vacancy, the deacons shall be responsible for filling the pulpit.

Section 4. Trustees

Three Trustees elected by the church, subject to confirmation of the court, shall hold in trust all property belonging to the church, and take all necessary measures for its protection. They shall at all times carry out the will of the church.

Section 5. Moderator

The church shall elect a moderator annually upon recommendation of the nominating committee. The Church shall elect a vice-moderator to serve in the absence of moderator. The moderator shall appoint all special committees, when not otherwise specified.

Section 6. Clerk

The clerk shall obtain and keep a faithful record of all the business meetings of the church. He/she shall keep a correct list of all members of the church and their addresses. He/she shall report to the church at the time of approval of the associational letter the number baptized, number received by letter or experience, number dismissed by letter, withdrawals, and by death, and shall post an up-to-date church roll at that time.

Section 7. Treasurer

The treasurer shall take charge of the records of all funds of the church, and pay all bills authorized by the finance committee or church membership. He/she shall present a monthly statement of expenses to the deacons, and at the regular business meeting of the church. He/she shall also present a yearly statement of all receipts and expenditures to the church at the close of the church fiscal year. He/she shall be under the supervision of the finance committee, and shall be a member of that committee. His books shall be audited yearly by a Public Accountant, or an audit committee.

Section 8. Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall keep an accurate record of the names of all members and the amounts pledged and paid. He/she shall send out semi-annual financial reports to all who have given through the church envelope system. It will be his duty to provide all members with their church envelopes. Members added to the church shall be given church envelopes as soon as practicable after their admission by the fellowship.

Section 9. Staff Employees

Church staff members will perform duties outlined in a job description adopted by the church.

Section 10. Director of Sunday School

The Director of Sunday School shall have general oversight of the entire school, and shall administer its affairs in cooperation with and according to the plans and methods of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, subject to the approval of the local church. He/she shall acquaint himself to the best methods of religious education and endeavor to adopt them in this school. It shall be his duty to counsel weekly or monthly with his teachers and officers through officers' and teachers' meetings, in the work of the school, giving advice and receiving suggestions from his co-workers. He/she shall see that a full and accurate report is made of the work of the Sunday school in the regular business meeting of the church.

Section 11. Director of Baptist Men

The Director of Baptist Men shall promote the work of the Baptist Men as outlined by the Brotherhood Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, seeking to enlist the men and boys of the church in an active program for Christ. He/she shall see that a full and accurate report is given at the regular business meetings of the church.

Section 12. Director of Woman's Missionary Union

The Director of Woman's Missionary Union shall seek to enlist all the women and girls of the church in a program of missions, training, giving, and activity according to plans promoted by the Women's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention. She shall see that a full and accurate report is given at the regular business meetings of the church.

ARTICLE VI COMMITTEES

Section 1. General

All church committee members shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church unless otherwise indicated in the description below. The committee members shall serve on a three-year rotating system and may not be re-elected to the same committee for a period of one year. They must be active members of the church. The following committees shall meet shortly after their election and set up their own organization of chairmen, etc.

Section 2. Leadership Council

- A. The primary functions of the council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by the church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the congregation the use of leadership; calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.
- B. The council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church, shall have as regular members the Pastor, Minister of Education, Minister of Music, Sunday School Director, Woman's Missionary Union Director, Baptist Men's Director, and Chair of Deacons. Committee chairpersons, ministry team leaders, and church-elected officers shall serve as ex officio members.
- C. All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

Section 3. Constitution Committee:

Shall consist of six (6) members who will consider all proposed amendments to the Church Constitution and in turn recommend such changes as are necessary to the church following the procedures for amendment as recommended in this constitution and by-laws. They will periodically review the constitution and by-laws in order to keep them current and workable.

Section 4. Finance Committee:

Shall consist of six (6) persons, two of whom shall be deacons, and the treasurer, whose duty it shall be to 1) look after the finances of the church, prepare and recommend the annual budget, 2) plan and promote the financial stewardship of the church, 3) shall see that books are audited by an outside source. An audit will be performed at the end of each calendar year, whenever a change is made in the position of church treasurer, and at any other time that might be necessary as approved by church vote. A written report of the audit will be presented to the church by the next business meeting, after the audit is complete. The committee is advised to consult with members of the Leadership Council in arriving at an adequate budget for the church. This committee's rotation shall be effective as of July 1 each year.

Section 5. Nominating Committee:

A Nominating Committee shall be composed of six (6) members, plus organizational leaders. It shall be their duty to nominate at least one or more members for each elective office and to prepare a ballot of same to be presented at the August business meeting. It shall be their duty to obtain the consent of all nominees before placing their names on the ballot.

Section 6. Pastoral Relations Committee:

Shall consist of six (6) members, age and gender balanced, serving as a liaison between Pastor and Congregation, clarifying mutual goals and interpreting needs as outlined in the Pastor/Congregation Covenant. This committee and pastor shall meet monthly.

Section 7. Pastoral Search Committee:

In the event of Pastoral vacancy, this committee of six (6) members, age and gender balanced, shall be elected by the congregation. The nominees shall come from recommendations submitted to the nominating committee by the congregation. The committee shall seek and recommend a prospective Pastor to the church.

Section 8. Personnel Committee:

The church shall maintain a personnel committee composed of three (3) at large church members. Election shall be by the church upon nomination by the nominating committee. Members of the committee shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of one year. The personnel committee shall assist the pastor in matters of personnel administration, and when necessary recommended church-staff changes or additions as indicated by a careful survey of church needs and requirements. In the interest of harmonious and effective church-staff relationships the committee shall together interview each member of the church staff at least once annually to survey the work being done, to clarify job descriptions, to interpret staff needs to the church, and to initiate and recommend such changes in the church-staff relationships as may be indicated.

Section 9. Property Committee:

Shall consist of six (6) members, three (3) of whom are men, and three (3) of whom are women, whose duty will be that of maintenance and upkeep of property belonging to the church, and caring for the beauty, cleanliness, and appearance of the church property.

Section 10. Tellers' Committee:

Shall consist of six (6) members whose duty it shall be to check all offerings of the church before depositing them in the bank. They shall keep a permanent record of same, and give a copy of each Sunday's record to the pastor and to the treasurer.

Section 11. Ushers:

Shall consist of 21 members whose duty shall be to assist persons attending worship service with seating, lighting, ventilation, sound, and other measures necessary for the service of worship. They shall be elected in three groups of seven with each group serving four times a year for one month. Ushers shall not rotate, but at the end of each year shall be eligible for re-election.

**ARTICLE VII
MINISTRY TEAMS**

Section 1. General

The Ministry Teams shall be composed of active church members, and regular attendees who are called to serve in these ministry areas. All Ministry Teams Leaders are to be active church members recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church.

Section 2. Audio –Visual Ministry Team:

Shall be responsible for all Audio-Visual equipment and the taping of worship services and other congregational events.

Section 3. Baptism Ministry Team:

Shall provide assistance for candidates of baptism.

Section 4. Benevolence Ministry Team:

Shall look after and care for persons in need with money from the Fellowship fund.

Section 5. Bereavement Ministry Team:

Shall prepare the sanctuary for funerals as follows: have two (2) members serve as ushers or greeters at the front door, turn on sound system, air conditioning or heat, place candles and flowers in the niche over the choir section and arrange for reserved family seating.

Section 6. Children’s Ministry Team:

Shall consist of workers, parents and other members the church family who are called to serve in this ministry. The team shall coordinate ministries in this area.

Section 7. Communion Ministry Team:

Shall prepare the elements of the Lord’s Supper and have charge of the Communion Set.

Section 8. Community Ministry/Outreach Ministry Team:

The team will provide opportunities for members of the congregation to reach out and meet the needs of others through community ministries and world missions.

Section 9. Discipleship Ministry Team:

Shall provide training opportunities for seekers, new Christians, church members and church leadership training.

Section 10. Fellowship Ministry Team:

Shall plan fellowship, recreation, and drama events.

Section 11. Flower Ministry Team:

Shall be responsible for securing, arranging, and disposing of floral arrangements for church services and for providing flowers for sick and bereaved members.

Section 12. Food Service Ministry Team:

Shall be made up of a Food Service Coordinator, Church Secretary, and volunteers as needed. Shall supervise kitchen, and prepare and serve food for all general church gatherings where necessary and assist individual groups in the church.

Section 13. Library Ministry Team:

Shall be responsible for the purchasing, processing and distribution of books for the church library, encourage the use of the library by individuals and organizations.

Section 14. World Mission/Evangelism Ministry Team:

Shall provide opportunities for members of the congregation to reach out and meet the needs of others through community ministries and world missions and provide leadership and support for outreach and evangelism programs to reach seekers and the unchurched for Jesus Christ

Section 15. Preschool Ministry Team:

Shall consist of workers, parents and other members of the church family who are called to serve in this area of ministry. The team shall coordinate ministries in this area.

Section 16. Worship Ministry Team:

Shall consist of the pastor, staff, and two (2) congregational representatives. The chairs/leaders of all worship support committees and teams shall serve as liaisons resources persons to the worship ministry team. They shall evaluate, plan and coordinate worship services of the church.

Section 17. Youth Ministry Team:

Shall consist of workers, parents, and other members of the church family who are called to serve in this area of ministry.

**ARTICLE VIII
PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS**

Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

Section 2. Sunday School

There shall be a Sunday School divided into divisions and classes for all ages and conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Director for the study of God's Word. The tasks of the Sunday School 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.

Section 3. Woman's Missionary Union

There shall be a Woman's Missionary Union with such officers and organizations as needed. The tasks of the Woman's Missionary Union shall be to teach missions; engage in mission action, support world missions through praying and giving; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

**ARTICLE IX
CHURCH FINANCES**

Section 1. The Budget

A unified budget adopted annually by the church will serve as a guideline for all local and world wide expenses. The budget will be submitted by the finance committee at least thirty (30) days prior to the date it goes into effect.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

A. General Account

All regular or special offerings will be deposited to the general account of the Wytheville Baptist Church and dispersed according to the guidelines of the church budget or designation of the offering.

B. Designated Accounts

All designated gifts or trusts will be deposited in special accounts, to be used according to the wishes of the donor. Such accounts may be savings or checking.

C. Fellowship Fund

Fellowship Fund will be monies received through offering following the Lord's Supper and will be managed by the Fellowship Committee.

D. The treasurer and Tellers Committee will be bonded.

**ARTICLE X
GENERAL MATTERS**

Section 1. License

When a member announces to the church that he/she feels the call to the ministry, the church by majority vote may license him as an acknowledgment of his call to the ministry and encouragement to make preparation for it. The clerk of the church may furnish the member with a copy of the minutes or a certificate of license as his credential. It is understood that the performance of civil duties by the member shall be governed by state law.

Section 2. Ordination

In the event this church has been requested to ordain a member who has felt the call to God to the ministry, the following procedure shall be followed: The church will express its approval by a vote of three-fourths of the members present at any regularly arranged business meeting of the church. Then the church shall invite the Associational Committee on Ordination to examine the candidate concerning his fitness for the ministry. In the event the Association has no such committee, this church shall invite representatives of neighboring Baptist churches to examine the candidate and report to the church. If the report of the committee is favorable, the church shall proceed with the ordination.

ARTICLE XI

The articles of this constitution and by-laws may be amended at any regular meeting of the church by a two-thirds vote of all members present, provided that two weeks notice of the proposed change shall have been given in writing in the church publication, THE BEACON, the weekly bulletin and announced at two regular preaching services of the church. Copies of all changes or amendments will be made available to members upon request.