

# BYLAWS

WESTWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH  
ALABASTER, ALABAMA

## PREAMBLE

So that the church may function in an orderly and biblical manner and so that the church can evangelize our community and help develop one another in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ, we establish these bylaws.

## ARTICLE I

### **Name and Denomination**

This body shall be known as Westwood Baptist Church, Alabaster, Alabama. It shall be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

## ARTICLE II

### **Purposes**

This church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for spiritual purposes which include the following:

1. Assemble the body of believers for public worship (Heb. 10:25)
2. Mutually support one another in fellowship. (Acts 2:21-24)
3. Help people mature in Christ's likeness. (Eph. 4:12,13)
4. Teach and preach the Word of God. (Col. 1:28)
5. Maintain an active mission of local and world-wide evangelism. (Matt. 28:18-20)
6. Help people discover and fulfill their God-given purpose. (Eph. 2:10)
7. Transform our local community through acts of love, sacrifice and service. (Matt. 25:35-40)

## ARTICLE III

### **Statement of Beliefs**

As members of this church, we subscribe to the following doctrinal statements as affirmed by The Baptist Faith and Message.

1. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of human beings, and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.
2. There is one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. Jesus Christ, both God and man, was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of God, He is our High Priest and Advocate.
4. That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.
5. That man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
6. That the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only those who receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.
7. That water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.
8. That the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which He is the head.
9. That Christ's return is imminent and that this truth has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.
10. That there will be a bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

#### ARTICLE IV

### **Member Covenant**

As members of Westwood Baptist Church, we seek to be faithful to God, our families, and to fellow believers at Westwood by making the following commitments a priority in our lives:

1. To grow in our relationship with Christ through Bible study and prayer. (1 Peter 1:2-3)
2. To pray for and follow the leadership of the church as we build God's kingdom together. (Eph. 6:19, Heb. 13:17)
3. To attend worship services of the church faithfully. (Heb. 10:25).
4. To protect my witness for Christ by avoiding actions that would cause others to stumble. (Phil. 1:27).
5. To welcome guests and newcomers to my church. (Romans 15:7)
6. To witness to those around me and help others witness across the globe. (Luke 14:23)
7. To encourage others through my words and actions. (Eph. 4:29)

8. To financially support my church, with the Scriptural example being a tithe. (1 Cor. 16:2, Lev. 27:30)
9. To build supportive relationships with other members. (1 Peter 1:22, Phil. 2:3-4).
10. To join a small group Bible study for fellowship and study of God's Word. (1 Thess. 5:11)
11. To discover my spiritual gifts and use them in ministry, serving others in the love of Christ (1 Peter 4:10, Eph. 4:11-12)

## ARTICLE V

### **Polity & Relationships**

1. The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it.
2. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership. (See Article I of the Bylaws.)
3. 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.
4. This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual cooperation with the following:
  - a. Shelby Baptist Association
  - b. The Alabama Baptist Convention
  - c. The Southern Baptist Convention.

## ARTICLE VI

### **Membership**

#### Section 1. General

Westwood Baptist Church is an autonomous church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of the church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of the church and the conditions of such membership.

#### Section 2. Admission of Members

Any person who is a follower of Christ and committed to live a lifestyle that honors Him may offer himself or herself as a candidate for membership. Candidates will be considered a member-in-process until such time as the following are completed:

1. Baptism by immersion.
2. An individual meeting with a decision counselor or member of the Equipping Staff to discuss the candidate's spiritual condition.
3. Completion of the membership class.

4. Signing a member covenant (see Article IV) stating agreement with the beliefs and practices of the church as well as agreement to live a Christ-centered life.

All such candidates may be accepted for membership by one of the following means:

1. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
2. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church, provided that the candidate has been baptized by immersion.
3. By statement of conversion and baptism in a church where no letter is obtainable.
4. By restoration after having been removed from the membership of the church. (See Article VI, Section VI)

Questions regarding qualification for membership shall be referred to the Senior Pastor and Executive Staff.

### Section 3. Right of Members

1. Every member in good standing of the church is entitled to vote on any matter brought before the church in conference.
2. Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

### Section 4. Responsibilities of Members

Members are expected to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life as described in Westwood's Church Member Covenant (see Article IV).

### Section 5. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) death of the member, (2) transfer to another church, (3) exclusion by disciplinary action of this church, or (4) erasure upon request.

### Section 6. Discipline & Reconciliation

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 Senior 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 Senior Pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, this process is completed by action of the Church Council, upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Church Unity Team, and the person may be declared no longer in the membership of the church. This action shall be reported to the church and reflected in the membership records of the church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The church, through the action of the Church Council, may restore to membership any person previously excluded with the approval of the Senior Pastor and Deacon Church Unity Team. This process may be initiated by the excluded person, having shown evidence of repentance and reformation.

## ARTICLE VII

### **Leadership Structure**

All who serve as officers of the church and those who serve on church work teams shall be members in good standing of this church. Officers and work team members shall be regular in attendance and faithful in service and support. Further guidelines for paid staff members shall be provided by the Church Personnel Policies.

#### Article VII, Section I

##### **The Church in Conference**

Final authority in all matters is vested in the congregation, consisting of all voting members. Operational authority is vested in the Church Council and Executive Staff. The congregation shall decide upon the calling of the Senior Pastor and other members of the Equipping Staff; election of officers and administrative work teams; annual operating budget; purchase, sale, or construction of church real property; establishing new equipping staff positions and such other matters as the Church Council shall determine.

The church shall have quarterly scheduled business meetings (Church Conferences) at such schedule as it shall determine. The Senior Pastor or someone designated by him shall serve as moderator of the conference.

The church may conduct Called Church Conferences to consider matters of a special nature and significance. The Church Council or Executive Staff may schedule a Called Church Conference, giving a one-week notice, unless extreme urgency renders one week notice impractical. Notice of any Called Church Conference shall include the subject matter, date, time and place; and shall be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting.

The quorum shall consist of those members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called according to bylaws. In some situations, provisions may be made in advance by the Church Council allowing for absentee ballot voting.

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

#### Article VII, Section II

##### **The Church Council**

Authority in all matters not brought before the church as stated in section 1 will reside in the Church Council. The Senior Pastor or a person designated by him will moderate the meeting. The Council may at its discretion bring matters before the church other than those listed in Section 1.

The Council will meet monthly at a time as it shall determine. The meeting will be open for participation among all church members, but only members of the Council will vote on issues before the Council.

The Council will be composed of the following:

- All Staff Members who are part of the Executive Staff
- Seven non-staff members of the congregation
- Church Treasurer
- Church Clerk
- Chairman of the Deacons
- Chairman of the Budget and Finance Work Team
- Chairman of the Personnel Work Team
- Chairman of the Weekday Education Team

Members of the Equipping Staff will serve as non-voting members of the Church Council. All non-staff positions on the Council are selected by the church's Leader Enlistment Work Team and approved by the Church in conference. Non-staff members of the Church Council, other than Treasurer and Clerk, will serve for a period of three calendar years as provided by the Leader Enlistment Policy. The chairman of a work team may appoint a representative to serve in his place on the Church Council.

The quorum shall consist of a majority of the total number of members on the Council.

#### Article VII, Section III

##### **The Executive Staff**

The Executive Staff will provide operational leadership to the church and its staff, working closely with administrative work teams; bringing recommendations to the Church Council regarding personnel, program and budget matters; and representing the Equipping Staff to the Church Council. The Executive Staff will report monthly to the Church Council.

This team shall be composed of at least three but not more than seven top-level members of the Equipping Staff, representing all ministries of the church through a supervisory capacity, including the Senior Pastor, Administrator, and others as determined by the Senior Pastor and Church Council.

#### Article VII, Section IV

##### **The Equipping Staff**

The Equipping Staff will provide guidance in planning, coordinating, conducting, evaluating and implementing the mission of the church. It will include the Senior Pastor and other pastors, ministers, or directors who carry the Ephesians 4 mandate to equip leaders for the work of ministry and of whom the church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister.

The Executive Staff and Personnel Work Team shall prepare a job description when the need for a staff member is determined. Equipping Staff Members shall be jointly recommended to the church by the Personnel Work Team and Senior Pastor. The Personnel Team, Church Council, and Senior Pastor jointly may vacate such positions at their discretion, after appropriate measures of discipline and/or reconciliation have been attempted. Article VII, Section V addresses the calling and dismissal of the Senior Pastor.

## Article VII, Section V

### **The Senior Pastor**

The Senior Pastor is responsible for providing leadership to all areas of the church, leading it to be an effective, Biblically-functioning community, giving particular attention in four areas: 1) preaching and teaching, 2) vision and leadership, 3) evangelism, and 4) pastoral care.

A Senior 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 Senior Pastor Selection Task Team shall be elected by the church according to the Senior Pastor Search Policy to seek out God's will for a Senior Pastor, and bring its recommendation to the church. Election shall be by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for issuing a call. The Senior Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his resignation or at the request of the church.

Should conflict arise between the church and the Senior Pastor, the Personnel Team shall take measures of discipline and/or reconciliation as they determine necessary. If reconciliation is not achieved, the Personnel Team and Church Council may recommend dismissal of the Senior Pastor to the church. Such action shall take place at a Church Conference called for that purpose, with at least one week's public notice given. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot; an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present being necessary to declare the office vacant.

## Article VII, Section VI

### **Non-equipping Staff**

Non-equipping staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The church Personnel Work Team shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-equipping staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member.

## Article VII, Section VII

### **Church Officers**

1. **Clerk.** A Clerk and Assistant Clerk are elected annually by the church upon the recommendation of the Leader Enlistment Work Team. The Clerk shall:
  - maintain a suitable record of all official actions of the church, storing them in the church office.
  - maintain a register of member names, with dates of admission, transfer, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms.
  - issue letters of transfer.
  - give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws.
  - prepare the annual report of the church to the association.
  - serve as parliamentarian for the Church Council and for the Church in Conference.

The Assistant Clerk shall perform any or all of the duties the Clerk may delegate. The Clerk may also delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a ministry assistant who will assist the Clerk.

2. **Treasurer.** A Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are elected annually by the church upon the recommendation of the Leader Enlistment Work Team. The Assistant Treasurer shall perform any or all of the duties the Treasurer may delegate.

The Treasurer shall serve as a representative of the church to review its financial records. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer and/or the Church Administrator, to present an itemized report of receipts and disbursements of the preceding month to the council and quarterly to the church. The Financial Report and records shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant. The church shall provide bonding for the Administrator and Treasurer.

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 and/or Church Administrator to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

3. **Trustees.** The Trustees of the Church 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 the 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.

The church shall elect three or more trustees at the recommendation of the Leader Enlistment Work Team to serve as legal officers of the church. They shall serve a three-year term on a rotation basis, with one new trustee being elected every year.

## Article VII, Section VIII **Work Teams**

1. **Administrative Teams**

Members of these teams are selected by the Leader Enlistment Team, and then approved by the Council and the Church. Candidates selected to serve on Administrative Teams should show exemplary commitment to living a Christian lifestyle and the church. No one shall be placed in service on a team that would result in any conflict of interest.

They shall serve a term of three years, but may be re-elected if completing only a partial term of service. Chairpersons of these teams are selected annually from their membership by the Leader Enlistment Work Team.

Administrative Teams will include the following: Budget & Finance, Leader Enlistment, Missions, Personnel, Trustees, Weekday Education Ministry, and others as determined by the Church Council.



## 2. Ministry Teams

Ministry Work Teams may be assembled at the discretion of the Senior Pastor and Equipping Staff. Chairpersons are selected annually by the Leader Enlistment Team for a period of one year. Both chairpersons and members are not limited in duration of service. Members of these teams are enlisted by the chairperson and appropriate members of the Equipping Staff.

### Article VII, Section IX

#### **Deacons**

The Deacon body, as established in 1 Timothy 3 and Acts 6, shall be a servant ministry to work alongside the Senior Pastor, Equipping Staff, and Small Group Leaders to provide pastoral care and ministry to the church body and to those in the community. Guidelines for selection and ministry of deacons are found in the Deacon Policy which outlines New Testament qualifications.

### ARTICLE VIII

#### **Ministries of the Church**

The church shall provide leadership and ministries to meet the five functions of the church: evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, worship, and ministry. These shall be accomplished through worship services, small groups, community involvement, ministry work teams and other ministries as established by the Equipping Staff and Church Council.

All organizations related to the church shall be under church control, with leadership directly or indirectly appointed by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all ministry activities subject to church coordination and approval.

Participation in some volunteer positions may only be filled by members of the church. These are determined by the Equipping Staff and Church Council.

### ARTICLE IX

#### **Church Ordinances**

##### Section 1: Baptism

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes him publicly and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Baptism shall be by immersion in water. The Senior Pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. 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 at least quarterly, as scheduled by the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper, the deacons being responsible for the physical preparations.

## ARTICLE X

### **Church Finances & Assets**

#### Section 1. Budget

The Budget and Finance Work Team, in consultation with the Executive Staff, shall prepare an annual operating budget and submit the proposed budget to the Church Council and Church for approval.

#### Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds received for any and all purposes shall be processed according to church policy 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. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Budget and Finance Work Team. The financial manager shall send quarterly reports to each member who has given during the fiscal year, listing their contributions.

#### Section 3. Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall run from January 1 until December 31.

#### Section 4. Dissolution of Church

Upon dissolution of this church, assets shall be distributed to the Shelby Baptist Association for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code.

## ARTICLE XI

### **Other Policies**

Other documents will be used in the governance of the church that provide more specific guidelines than are stated in the bylaws. These include but are not limited to the Personnel Policy, Deacon Policy, Work Team Policy, Church Policy Manual, and Senior Pastor Selection Policy. These policies may not supercede anything contained in the bylaws. All policies will be approved by the Executive Staff, Council, or Church, as determined by the Church Council.

## ARTICLE XII

### **Amendments to the Bylaws**

Proposed amendments to the Bylaws shall be presented at a church conference and approved at a second church conference at least one week later. Either or both meetings may be a quarterly or called church conference. Copies of the proposed amendments shall be furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the bylaws shall require approval of a majority of members present and voting.

Church Bylaws Proposed to Westwood on August 23, 2006.