

BY-LAWS OF MILWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

Amended September 13, 2015

ARTICLE I

NAME AND PURPOSE

SECTION ONE. NAME.

The name of the church shall be Milwood Baptist Church.

SECTION TWO. PURPOSE.

The Church is formed to support public worship, proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and make disciples through such ministries as may be determined by the Church.

Our purpose is the joyful building up the body of Christ for the glory of God. We build up the body of Christ by making disciples and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit upon profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God crucified for our sins and resurrected from the dead. Furthermore, we build up the body of Christ maturing disciples, teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded.

SECTION THREE. STATEMENT OF FAITH.

Milwood's statement of faith is the Baptist Faith and Message (2000).

ARTICLE II

CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

SECTION ONE. GOVERNMENT.

Milwood Baptist Church is a sovereign, democratic, and autonomous church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This means the church retains unto itself the exclusive right of self government in all phases of its spiritual and temporal life. The church reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members and the conditions of such membership. This Church's authority and government is vested in its members, under the headship of Jesus Christ, as set forth herein. The Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but enjoys mutual counsel and cooperation with other churches of like faith and order.

SECTION TWO. CANDIDACY FOR MEMBERSHIP.

Candidates for membership will be presented by the Elders to the church for a vote at a regular worship service upon meeting the following requirements:

- (1) Have professed and shown faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- (2) Have submitted to baptism upon their profession of faith, with recommendation from another church as needed.
- (3) Have affirmed submission to the doctrines, values, and policies established by the church.

A unanimous vote by the church is desired for admission to membership and in the case that a candidate is unanimously approved he/she becomes a member. In the case that a candidate does not receive unanimous approval by the church the elders will make inquiry into the grounds for the objection. After the elders come to understand the grounds for the objection they shall present the candidate to the church, giving report of their inquiry. The church shall vote on the candidate again, which at this time only requires a 3/4 vote.

SECTION THREE. CLASSES OF MEMBERS AND RIGHTS OF MEMBERS.

There shall be one class of members of the Church which shall have the following rights:

- (1) Every member of the Church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church, provided the member is present or special provision has been made by the Church for absentee voting. Unless otherwise designated in these By-laws, all issues require a three-fourths vote of the members present for passage.
- (2) Every member of the Church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the Church, given they meet the qualifications of the said office.
- (3) Every member of the Church may participate in the Lord's Supper.

SECTION FOUR. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP.

Membership shall be terminated in the following way:

- (1) Death of the member,
- (2) Erasure by written request of the member,
- (3) Exclusion by action of this church.

SECTION FIVE. DISCIPLINE.

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 Elders, other members of the Church Staff, and Deacons are available for counsel, guidance, and prayer. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition exists which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the Church, the Elders will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18:15-20. If it becomes necessary for the Church to take action to exclude a member, a three-fourths vote of the members present in a business meeting is required; and the Church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the Church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness, forbearance, and hope for restoration.

By a three-fourths vote of the members present in a business meeting or church service, the Church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon that person's request and upon demonstration of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

ARTICLE III

CHURCH STAFF AND OFFICERS

SECTION ONE. CHURCH OFFICERS.

All who serve as officers and ministerial staff of the Church **must** be members of the Church.

The offices of the Church shall be Elders, Deacons, Sr. Pastor, Ministerial staff, Treasurer, and Trustees.

- (1) **ELDERS.** The elders are responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament Church. They shall be ordained to oversee all functions of the church as under-shepherds of Jesus Christ, who is the head. As overseers they are to lead the church by teaching, giving example, ministry direction, and seeking God's will for the future of the church. They are to equip the members of the church to do the work of the ministry in order to build up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).

The Elders are to lead eagerly, not out of compulsion, but as those who will

give account to Jesus for their ministry. (1 Peter 5:1-5, Hebrews 13:17).

- a. **Qualifications of an Elder** - The qualifications for serving as an Elder are found in three passages of scripture: 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Any man, from among the church membership, who meets these qualifications is eligible to serve as an Elder of the church.
- b. **Appointment and Number of Elders** - In order to serve as an Elder of the church a man must first be appointed by the existing elder body. His qualification must then be affirmed by the church body after being presented to the church. Once affirmed, Elders shall serve as long as they are faithful to their duties. There shall be a minimum of three elders including the Sr. Pastor.
- c. **Dismissal of an Elder** - In the case that an elder fails to maintain the qualifications of the office he may be removed from the Elder body by a 3/4 vote of the serving elders or by a 3/4 vote of the membership at a special or called business meeting. This does not pertain to the Sr. Pastor whose dismissal procedures are found in III.(2)d.

(2) **SENIOR PASTOR.** The Sr. Pastor shall be an Elder and serve as first among equals in the Elder body (1 Peter 5:1-4). The Sr. Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the Church staff in their ministries for the building up of Christ's church (Ephesians 4:12).

The Sr. Pastor is to lead the church in preaching and vision for the church. He is leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. As such he works with the Elders, Deacons and Church staff to (1) lead the Church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaim the Gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) care for the Church's members and other persons in the community.

- a. **Qualification** - The qualifications of the Sr. Pastor are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Any man who meets these qualifications, and has been ordained by a like believing body, is eligible to serve as Pastor of the church.
- b. **Pastor Search** - In the case that the office of the Pastor is vacant the Elders shall oversee the search process ~~seeking~~ including involvement from the Deacons and church members.
- c. **Appointment of Sr. Pastor** - A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church by a three-fourths vote of the members present at a

meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two weeks notice has been given to the members.

- d. **Dismissal of Sr. Pastor** - The Sr. Pastor may be removed from office, by a 3/4 vote of the membership present at a special business meeting called by the elders for that purpose. This business meeting may only be called by the elders. The moderator for this meeting shall be an Elder. Upon a 3/4 vote of the membership to remove the Sr. Pastor from office the termination of the Pastor's employment shall be effective immediately unless otherwise stated when voted upon.

(3) **DEACONS.** In accordance with the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the Church. They shall be ordained to provide assistance to the ministry of the Elders and service to the fellowship of the Church. They are responsible for clerical duties at regular and special called business meetings and will serve as secretary.

- a. **Qualification of Deacons** - Any person who meets the spiritual qualifications set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and I Timothy 3:8-13.
- b. **Appointment and Number of Deacons** - The Elders shall call upon the church to nominate as many persons as they feel are required to fulfill the ministries of the church. In order to serve as a Deacon of the church a person must be nominated by the church body, affirmed by the Elder body, and approved by the church with a 3/4 vote. There shall be no obligation to recognize a Deacon who comes to this Church from another church of like faith. Once elected, Deacons shall serve thereafter as long as they are faithful to their duties.
- c. **Dismissal of Deacons** - In the case that a Deacon fails to maintain the qualifications of the office he may be removed from the Deacon body by a 3/4 vote of the church. The dismissal of a Deacon must be submitted to the church from the Elder body.

(4) **MINISTERIAL STAFF.** The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the Elders present the need to the Church for such offices, as budgeted.

- a. **Qualifications** - When the need for a staff member is determined, a job description and qualifications shall be written by the Elders and submitted to the Church for approval.
- b. **Appointment** - The staff member shall be recommended to the Church by the Elders at a special business meeting called for that

purpose. A 3/4 vote of the members present is required to employ the new staff person.

- c. **Dismissal of Ministerial Staff** - Ministerial Staff may be removed from office and their employment terminated by a 3/4 vote of the membership present at a special business meeting called for that purpose. This special called business meeting may only be called by the elders upon a 3/4 vote within the elder body. The moderator for such a meeting shall be the Sr. Pastor or an Elder. The termination of the Ministerial Staff's employment shall be effective immediately unless otherwise stated when voted upon.

- (5) **CHURCH TREASURER.** The Church shall elect annually a Treasurer as its financial officer. The Treasurer shall be nominated by the Elders and Deacons. A 3/4 vote of the members present at a regular or special business meeting is required.

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon proper authorization, all money or things of value paid by or given to the Church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to render to the Deacons and Elders itemized reports of the receipts and disbursements before each regular business meeting and as requested. The Treasurer's report and records may be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant.

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 to the Deacons, who shall keep and preserve the annual account as a part of the permanent records of the Church.

- (6) **TRUSTEES.** Trustees of the church shall be nominated by the church body and elected annually by a 3/4 vote at a business meeting. There shall be at least three elected from among the Elders and Deacons and two from the church membership.

They shall hold the Church property in the corporate name of the Church. Upon specific vote of the Church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any Church property, but not otherwise. When the signatures of the Trustees are required, any two or more shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase or

rental of property, or other legal documents related to Church approved matters.

SECTION TWO. NON-MINISTERIAL STAFF.

The non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the Elders determines the need for their services. The Elders shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members as has been budgeted by the church. Such employment and termination of services shall occur after consultation, as appropriate, with the supervising staff member, Deacons, or Ministry Leaders.

ARTICLE IV

Committees, Teams , and Programs

Committees, Teams or Programs may be established for the purpose of achieving the church's purpose and the leadership of the elders. All programs and ministries of the church shall be under the control of the church and shall be assessed annually. The structure and organization of Committees, Programs, or Teams shall be decided at the establishment of each.

ARTICLE V

CHURCH ORDINANCES

SECTION ONE. BAPTISM.

The Church may receive for baptism all persons who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior by personal faith, and who indicate a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Baptism shall be by immersion in water. The Elders, or whomever the elders shall authorize, shall administer baptism. A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the Elders.

SECTION TWO. LORD'S SUPPER.

This Church shall observe the Lord's supper. The Elders and Deacons shall direct the administration of the Lord's supper.

ARTICLE VI

CHURCH MEETINGS

SECTION ONE. WORSHIP SERVICES.

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday and other times as desired for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The Elders shall direct the services for all Church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

SECTION TWO. BUSINESS MEETINGS.

The Sr. Pastor shall normally serve as Moderator, presiding over Church business meetings. In absence of the Sr. Pastor ~~the Elders shall appoint~~ an Elder is to preside as moderator.

- A) Annual Budget and Finance Meeting-** An annual budget and finance meeting shall be held at a set time and date with two weeks notice being given to the church at regular Sunday services and elsewhere as appropriate.
- B) Regular.** Other regular meetings will be organized for the purpose of reporting, building up, planning, fellowship, and communication
- C) Special.** The Elders may call special business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. The notice of a special business meeting shall include the subject, the date, the time, and the place of the meeting, and it must be given by announcement in the Sunday worship services at least two weeks prior to the meeting. No business except that for which the meeting was called may be transacted.

The church membership may request a special business meeting by a written petition to the Elders signed by not less than one-fourth of the Church members on the membership role, or as otherwise provided specifically in these By-laws.

ARTICLE VII

QUORUM

A quorum shall consist of those members who attend any regular or special business meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

CHURCH FINANCES

SECTION ONE. BUDGET.

The Deacons, under guidance of the Elders and with counsel from the Ministry Leaders, shall prepare and submit to the Church for approval an inclusive annual budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all expenses.

SECTION TWO. ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES.

All funds received from any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the Church Treasurer and be properly recorded on the books of the Church.

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Elders, Deacons, and the Treasurer. The Elders, Deacons, and the Treasurer shall serve the church by developing and recommending to the church adequate policies and procedures related to receiving, accounting, disbursing and reporting Church monies, and to maintain records of members' contributions and provide regular reports of the same.

The Trustees shall be authorized to execute the appropriate depository agreements for the deposit of the funds and securities of the Church as deemed proper and recommended by the Deacons. All checks of the Church, and all orders for deposit or withdrawal of securities from the designated depository or depositories shall be signed by at least two persons as authorized by the Church to sign checks.

SECTION THREE. FISCAL YEAR.

The Church fiscal year shall be the calendar year of January 1 thru December 31.

ARTICLE IX

AMENDMENTS

Changes in these By-laws may be made at any business meeting of the Church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting at regular Sunday services and elsewhere as appropriate. Amendments to the By-laws shall be adopted by receiving the affirmative vote of three-fourths of the Church members present at a business meeting.