

By-Laws of the Windham Baptist Church

Suggested Amendment March 23, 2008

Article I: Membership

Section 1: Reception of Members (Qualifications and Procedure)

To be accepted into membership of this church, a person shall give testimony of having transferred his or her trust to the work of Jesus Christ before an Elder. They shall have conduct in accordance with the Scriptures and have been baptized by immersion (unless physically unable). They shall be in agreement with the Constitution, By-laws, and the membership covenant. They also shall attend a membership class. Upon recommendation of the Board of Elders and the vote of the church, candidates shall be received into membership. Reception of new members may take place any Sunday during the worship service.

Section 2: Age and Privileges

No one may be received into membership until he/she has reached his/her 12th birthday, and no member shall have a vote until he/she has reached his/her 18th birthday. Except for the power of voting, all members under 18 will have all the privileges of membership, including the right to attend business meetings and of expression from the floor. No member under 18 may be elected to the stated offices of the church.

Section 3: Discipline

Part 1. General

The Board of Elders and the church's responsibility is to oversee the doctrine and the conduct of its members. To belong to the church requires adherence to the doctrines and standards of conduct required in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are to be an instrument of discipline (2 Timothy 3:16) and should be taught "with all authority" (Titus 2:15).

The exercise of church discipline is a command from the Lord. When properly exercised, it is a profound display of Christian love. It is no more love for a Christian to watch a brother in Christ pursue a course of sin unchallenged than it is love for a parent to watch his child walk unhindered into disaster (Hebrews 12:5ff.).

Just as the church applies biblical principles in admitting persons to membership, so too must the church apply biblical principles in the governing of the membership and, if necessary, in removal from membership. The church which refuses to exercise discipline can neither command the world's respect nor the confidence of its own members.

Part 2. Purpose of Church Discipline

- (1) To glorify God by obedience to His instructions for maintenance of proper church government (Matthew 18:15-19; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:15 and Titus 3:10-11).
- (2) To reclaim offenders. The intent of church discipline is always the restoration of the offender (Matthew 18:15; 1 Corinthians 5:5 and Galatians 6:1).
- (3) To maintain the purity of the church and its worship and to avoid profaning the Lord's Table (1 Corinthians 11:27).
- (4) To deter others from sin (Acts 5:1-11 and 1 Timothy 5:20).
- (5) To prevent giving cause for God to set Himself against a local church (Revelation 2:14-25).

Part 3. Need for Church Discipline

Church discipline may be necessary when:

- (1) Christian unity is violated by those who destroy the peace of the church (Proverbs 6:16-19; Romans 16:17-18 and Titus 3:10-11).
- (2) A member has fallen into and practices sin (Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 5).
- (3) A member rejects the essential doctrines of the church or professes and/or propagates false doctrine. This does not apply to Christians who fail to understand and receive every doctrine revealed in the Bible for all Christians are learning and growing. This applies to individuals who knowingly reject any of the doctrines which the church considers essential and fundamental.

Part 4. The Procedure of Church Discipline

The following procedures shall be used as a guide for Church discipline.

- (1) If a person falls into sin or teaches false doctrine, there must be witnesses to the transgression. When a difficulty arises between two brethren, the two are to attempt to reconcile their differences privately (Matthew 18:15).
- (2) Before bringing the matter before the church body, a second attempt should be made privately with one or two witnesses with the intent to bring about the repentance of the sinning person(s) (Matthew 18:16).
- (3) If the private attempts fail, the matter must be brought before the Elders. The Elders shall carefully and prayerfully review the situation and if all private attempts at reconciliation have failed, the Elders shall bring the case before the church body.
- (4) Excommunication. If bringing the case before the church body does not lead to repentance, then the church is to exclude the person(s) from the fellowship of believers (1 Corinthians 5:11-13). "If he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen and a publican" (Matthew 18:17). It is the responsibility of the members of this church to pray for any persons thus removed from fellowship that God will bring them to repentance.

Part 5. Restoration

Whenever a person gives evidence of true repentance, he is to be restored and treated with love and humility (2 Corinthians 2:6-8 and Galatians 6:1-5).

Section 4: Termination of Membership

Paragraph 1- Any member desiring to withdraw his/her membership shall present his/her resignation in writing. Action must be taken thereon at the next business meeting of the church, provided that the Pastor or the Elders have had an opportunity, where possible, to fully investigate the reason for such request.

Paragraph 2- Members who have been inactive with the fellowship of the church for one year or have broken their agreement to abide by the Constitution and By-laws, shall, when possible, be contacted by the Pastor or other Elders. Upon recommendation of the Board of Elders and the vote of the church, a member shall be removed from membership. All persons removed from membership must be notified of such in writing.

Section 5: Associate Membership

Any student, missionary or other temporary resident, may hold associate membership in the church (they may retain their primary membership in their home church), providing they meet the requirements of **Article I, Section 1**. Associate members shall enjoy all the privileges of a regular member.

Article II: Officers and Committees

Section 1: Officers

The officers of this church shall consist of the Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), a Board of Elders, a Board of Deacons, a Clerk, an Assistant Clerk, a Treasurer, an Assistant Treasurer, a Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretaries. All officers must be members of this church.

Section 2: Elections

All officers and committees shall be elected by written ballot at the annual meeting. Except where otherwise stated, the term of office shall be for one year or until a successor is elected. Vacancies may be filled at any quarterly or special business meeting. All elections shall be by a majority vote, excepting that the Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), Elders and Deacons shall be elected by a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting.

Section 3a: Pastor

The Pastor must meet the qualifications of Elder/Bishop as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and other Scriptures. He shall give himself to the ministry of the Word, and prayer; the oversight of the flock; and in general, guidance of the spiritual welfare of the church as set forth in the Scriptures. He shall make a written report of the year's work at the annual meeting. Upon recommendation of the pulpit committee and a three-fourths vote of the eligible members present and voting at any regular or special business meeting, the Pastor shall be elected. His duties shall begin when he is received into membership. He shall, without further election, be a member of the Board of Elders. The pastoral relationship may be dissolved by a written notice of such intention, no less than thirty days in advance, by the Pastor of the church.

Upon three-fourths recommendation of the Board of Elders, not including the Pastor, and majority vote of the membership at any regular or special business meeting having a quorum of forty percent (40%), as determined in **Article VI, Section 2, Paragraph 5**, the Pastor may be removed from office. In the event of removal from office, the church shall continue its financial obligation to the Pastor for a period of thirty days.

Section 3b: Associate Pastors

Associate Pastors must meet the qualifications of Elder/Bishop as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and other Scriptures. They shall give themselves to the ministry of the Word, and prayer; the oversight of the flock; and in general, guidance of the spiritual welfare of the church as set forth in the Scriptures. Upon recommendation of the Board of Elders and a three-fourths vote of the eligible members present and voting at any regular or special business meeting, Associate Pastors shall be elected. Their duties shall begin when they are received into membership. They shall, without further election, become members of the Board of Elders. The pastoral relationship may be dissolved by a written notice of such intention, no less than thirty days in advance, by the Associate Pastor of the church.

Upon three-fourths recommendation of the Board of Elders, not including the Associate Pastor involved, and majority vote of the membership at any regular or special business meeting having a quorum of forty percent (40%), as determined in **Article VI, Section 2, Paragraph 5**, an Associate Pastor may be removed from office. In the event of removal from office, the church shall continue its financial obligation to the Associate Pastor for a period of thirty days.

Section 4: The Board of Elders

The Elders must qualify Scripturally as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and other Scriptures, and they must have been members of this church for one full year. This board shall oversee all the interests of the church but, for conscience sake, shall not have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer real estate without specific authority from the church. This board shall, when necessary be responsible for

discipline of the membership. This board shall, in the absence of the Pastor or a vacancy in the pastorate, assume and/or arrange for the execution of the duties of the Pastor. In the absence of an elected Board of Deacons, this board shall assume their duties and responsibilities. This board shall examine all missionary candidates and approved candidates will be brought before the church for final vote on acceptability and support. The Board of Elders shall oversee the hiring of Pastoral staff and church personnel. The congregation must approve both the position and person for all pastoral staff as outlined above in sections 3a and 3b. All other staff positions must be approved by the congregation but the actual hiring will be left to the Board of Elders.

After election by the church body, each elder shall serve for a three year term. At the end of this three year term an elder can be elected for another three year term if he seeks the office. At the end of two consecutive three year terms every elder is expected to take a one year sabbatical leave but can be elected again. The requirement to have at least two elders on the board or other very necessary reason can require an elder not to take his intended sabbatical.

Each year, this board shall elect one of its members as chairman. The chairman of the Board of Elders shall also serve as Church Moderator. The Board of Elders shall be limited only by this Constitution and By-laws, and shall be responsible for its actions only to the congregation. There shall be a minimum of two Elders. This board shall make a written report of the year's work at the annual meeting. It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders to oversee the work of the Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons shall serve under the Board of Elders and assist them in any way the Elders deem necessary (Acts 6:3b).

Section 5: The Board of Deacons

The Deacons must qualify scripturally as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and shall have been a member of this church one full year. This board shall function as trustees of the church corporation. The purpose for this board's existence is to serve the Elders so they (the Elders) will not neglect the spiritual needs of the church (Acts 6:2,4). This board shall have as their primary function the care of the properties and facilities of the church. This board shall also handle the church's financial affairs. The Deacon Board is responsible for all leases, maintenance contracts, or other financial contracts but must have Elder approval to initiate these. Any contract exceeding \$3,500.00 must be brought before the congregation for approval. The Board of Deacons is responsible for the administration of the Deacon's Fund for the assistance of the needy. Each year, this board shall elect one of its members to serve as chairman. The chairman of the Board of Deacons shall serve as vice moderator of the church.

Section 6: Clerk

The clerk shall record the minutes of all business meetings and shall keep an accurate membership roll. The clerk shall also keep accurate records of the attendance at all regular services of the church, deaths, weddings and baptisms.

Section 7: Assistant Clerk

The assistant clerk shall assist the clerk in such ways as may be designated by the clerk, and, in the absence of the clerk, shall perform the duties of the clerk.

Section 8: Treasurer

The treasurer shall be accountable for all monies deposited by the financial secretary, shall pay all bills as authorized by the Board of Deacons, and shall keep proper records of all transactions. Upon request by the Board of Deacons, the treasurer shall attend meetings of the Board of Deacons, in order to report to them the financial condition of the church and such other financial information. Written reports shall be prepared for all regular business meetings and at such times as requested by the Board of Deacons.

Section 9: Assistant Treasurer

The assistant treasurer shall assist the treasurer of the church in his/her designated duties and shall be authorized to assume these duties for periods of time designated by the treasurer and the Board of Deacons. All standards required of the treasurer shall also apply to the assistant treasurer. There may be more than one Assistant Treasurer.

Section 10: Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall receive and account for all donations and give individual receipts annually. It shall be the financial secretary's responsibility to see that all funds are deposited as soon as possible, and that the treasurer is advised to the exact amount of the deposit. All funds shall be counted before a witness.

Section 11: Assistant Financial Secretary

The assistant financial secretary shall assist the financial secretary in such ways as may be designated by the financial secretary, and, in the absence of the financial secretary, shall perform the duties of the financial secretary. There may be more than one Assistant Financial Secretary.

Section 12: Nominating Committee

This committee shall consist of at least five people who have been members of Windham Baptist Church for at least two years. The committee must contain at least two elders and one deacon, and the members shall be appointed at a business meeting at least twelve weeks prior to the annual meeting. The board of Elders shall present this committee with a list of recommended nominees. The nominations of the committee must be posted at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting and presented in writing, with a copy for each member, at the annual meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor during the annual meeting, with those added being voted on during the same meeting. In the event a nomination is made from the floor, that nominee will not be voted on at that meeting. The nominating committee will reconvene to review the nominee's qualifications. Any nominee who is found to meet Biblical and bylaw qualifications will be voted on at the next regular or special business meeting.

Section 13: Pulpit Committee

The pulpit committee shall consist of the Board of Elders and two deacons. This committee shall be encouraged to seek the advice of the C.B.A. of Maine and the C.B.A. of New England, and such others as it deems advisable, regarding the most desirable procedures for determining God's leading in the choice of a new Senior Pastor. The pulpit committee shall recommend to the church a desirable candidate. Only one candidate at a time shall be presented to the church for consideration.

Section 14: Audit Committee

The auditing committee shall consist of two church members, elected at the annual meeting, who shall carefully examine and audit the books and records of the church, excluding the Deacon's Fund, and shall report in writing at the annual meeting.

Section 15: Sub-committees

Such sub-committees as are deemed necessary by the Board of Elders or by the Board of Deacons may be appointed by the respective board to assist them in a specific task. A sub-committee may, at the discretion of the appointing board, include believers who regularly fellowship with us, and meet the requirements of

of membership regarding testimony and doctrine. Sub-committees shall have no authority outside that delegated to them by the appointing board. The term of sub-committee members shall automatically cease on the completion of its specific task or at the end of one year.

Article III: Ordinances

Section 1: The Lord's Supper

In accordance with our Lord's gracious words in I Corinthians 11:23-25 and other Scriptures, the Lord's Supper is to be observed in remembrance of Him to show forth the Lord's death until He comes. The emblems of the Communion Service are to be set forth as symbols of our Lord's flesh and blood. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once per month. All who have been born again shall be invited, and shall be administered by the Pastor/Elders and distributed to the congregation by faithful and upright men of the Elder's choosing.

Section 2: Baptism

The Ordinance of Baptism shall be administered only to those who have first been born again, have appeared before an Elder, and who have been recommended by the Pastor or the Board of Elders for baptism. Infant baptism shall not be practiced. A Christian may be baptized whether or not he/she is contemplating membership. Baptism shall not be set forth as a condition of salvation, but as an initiatory, testimonial, and symbolic act taught and commanded in the Scriptures.

Article IV: Ordination

A Christian who desires to be ordained to the Christian ministry must fulfill the Scriptural qualifications of an Elder or Bishop, as set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and other Scripture. He should not be considered unless and until the church has had an opportunity to have sufficient knowledge of his qualifications (I Timothy 5:22). After examination by the Board of Elders or by an ordination council called by the church, at the request of the Board of Elders, the church shall vote on the ordination with a three-fourths majority of those present and voting required for approval. If approved, an appropriate public service shall be convened for ordination. The ordination shall be a witness to the world that the church believes the Holy Spirit has called the candidate to a particular work and that the church has subsequently set the candidate apart for this work (Acts 13:1-4).

Article V: Fiscal Policy

Section 1: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall commence on the first of July.

Section 2: The Budget

Paragraph 1- The budget sets the limit of expenditures as approved by the congregation at the annual meeting. A unified budget will be used. The previously accepted budget will be in effect until the new budget is adopted.

Paragraph 2- The Board of Deacons will be responsible for the administration of the budget. They may not exceed budgeted limitations as set by the congregation.

Paragraph 3- Expenditures over the designated limits must be approved by the congregation at any business meetings duly called. The only exceptions to this being emergencies relating to church property.

Section 3: The Proposed Budget

The Board of Deacons will be responsible for presenting to the congregation a proposed budget at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting

Section 4: Designated Giving

On occasion the Church, in the exercise of its religious, educational and charitable purposes, may establish special funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may also suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature.

In order to protect the validity of the annual budget, all contributions made to special funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and approval of the Board of Elders and/or Board of Deacons. By contributing to a special fund, donors acknowledge that the Church has full authority to apply those contributions to other purposes in the event the original intent or goal of the special fund is cancelled or is no longer viable.

It is also intended that any designated contributions by members be above their tithes and offerings. Any contribution or special designation not approved by the Board of Deacons will be returned to the contributor if he or she wishes.

Article VI: Meetings and Services

Section 1: Worship, Bible Study and Prayer Services

The number, time and place of regular services shall be based on Acts 2:42, Hebrews 10:23-25, and other related Scriptures. Regular services shall be based on the needs of the congregation and the demands of Scripture as determined by the Board of Elders.

Section 2: Business Meetings

Paragraph 1-The Annual Meeting of the church shall be held on the first Sunday in June following the morning service. At this meeting, officers shall be elected, yearly reports of officers and committees shall be presented in writing, and other business may be transacted.

Paragraph 2-Quarterly business meetings of the church shall be held on the second Sunday of each quarter. At these meetings, reports of the Clerk, Treasurer, Board of Elders and Board of Deacons will be presented, and other business may be transacted.

Paragraph 3-A business meeting shall be called whenever the Moderator considers it necessary, and must also be called by the Moderator whenever he is requested to do so by the Pastor, the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons, or a quorum as determined below. These meetings shall be limited to the specific items announced subject to **Paragraph 4**.

Paragraph 4-Special business meetings must be announced on the two Sunday mornings preceding such meetings. Such calls may be in the form of verbal announcements from the pulpit, or printed in the church bulletin. For the purpose of voting on new members, the call may be limited to one Sunday morning announcement before the meeting. It shall be the rule of such to include the main purpose of the meeting, and at the discretion of the Pastor or chairman of the Board of Elders, written notices may also be sent to the entire congregation.

Paragraph 5-A quorum shall consist of twenty percent (20%) of the entire voting membership; excluding members living more than fifty miles from the church, shut-ins, invalids, and members who have not attended church for a year or more. A quorum for the year shall be established by the church clerk and announced to the church at the Annual Business Meeting.

Paragraph 6-Robert's Rules of Order shall be used in the transaction of business, except in cases where they may conflict with this Constitution and By-laws.

Paragraph 7-These By-laws may be amended at any business meeting on a Sunday or a Wednesday night duly called, but only by a three fourths vote of the members present and voting. Such proposed amendments must be announced at least two Sunday mornings before the vote. Amendments may be presented by the Pastor, the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons or a quorum. All proposed amendments must be cleared through the Moderator before being announced.

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