

Winthrop Street Baptist Church Bylaws
Updated October 16, 2016

ARTICLE 1 - Name

This church, a non-profit organization, shall be known as "Winthrop Street Baptist Church", hereafter "WSBC". The entire membership of the church shall constitute a Corporation, whose fiscal year shall commence on the first day of May and terminate on the thirtieth day of the following April.

ARTICLE 2 - Statement of Faith

Our guiding principle: In the essentials unity, in the non-essentials liberty, and in everything love. Our Statement of Faith represents those foundational, non-negotiable truths upon which our church and faith are built.

See Addendum containing the complete Statement of Faith for WSBC.

ARTICLE 3 - Membership

Members are those who have committed to partner with Winthrop Street Baptist Church on the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

A. Qualifications

1. In order to be eligible as a member of WSBC a person must meet the following requirements:
 - a. Confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
 - b. Give evidence of regeneration.
 - c. Has been baptized in obedience to Christ following his or her regeneration.
 - d. Agree to embrace and submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed by the Statement of Faith.
 - e. Promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.
2. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely upon a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

B. Becoming a Member

1. To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

C. Expectations

1. In accordance with the duties expressed in the Church Covenant, each member shall be expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.
2. Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. As such it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the appointment of elders, on decisions regarding members, and on other matters that may be submitted to a vote.

D. Church Discipline

1. Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.
2. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, removal from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14–15; 1 Timothy 5: 19–20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).
3. The purpose of such discipline should be for the following reasons:
 - a. Repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4–5; Hebrews 12: 1–11; Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5; Matthew 7: 26–27; 18: 15–17; Luke 17: 3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5; Galatians 6: 1–5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14–15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1: 13–14; James 1: 22);
 - b. The instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–25);
 - c. The purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);
 - d. The good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28: 7; Matthew 5: 13–16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10);
 - e. The glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2: 24; 15: 5–6; II Corinthians 6: 14–7: 1; Ephesians 1:4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).

E. Membership Renewal and Removal

1. Membership is reviewed and renewed on a periodic basis. Members can be removed through:
 - a. Failure to renew their membership
 - b. Voluntary resignation of membership by one in good standing
 - c. Death
 - d. A decision by the church as a result of the disciplinary process.
2. Members are prohibited from voluntarily resigning their membership while subject to the formal disciplinary process.

F. Membership Care

1. Those members in good standing who are no longer able to attend worship due to legitimate physical limitations and who remain local will be placed on a member care list.
2. The church will take responsibility for the spiritual wellbeing of those on the member care list even though they are no longer able to meet all of the expectations of the church covenant.

3. The church will still expect those on the member care list to fulfill the commitments listed in the church covenant where they are physically able to do so.

ARTICLE 4 - Officers

The Officers of WSBC shall be: A non-staff representative of the elders, Chairman of the Prudential Committee and the Treasurer. These Officers will be the authorized signatures of the Church for financial purposes. None of these officers will hold more than one of these positions at the same time.

ARTICLE 5 - Ministry Committees and Positions

Each ministry committee shall serve under the guidance of the elders. Each committee should be composed of mature believers who have a passion to serve others. They should understand that servant-leadership is our model and be willing to put the needs of others ahead of personal agendas. They must be active members in good standing.

A. Terms and Selection, General

1. Unless otherwise specified, terms shall be for one year and renewed as long as the individual is willing, able, and qualified.
2. During the first meeting of the fiscal year, which needs to be held within thirty days of the Annual Meeting and include departing members as well as new members, each committee shall appoint a Chairman and Secretary. Once chosen, these appointments must be reported to the elders.
3. Terms shall begin on the first day of June.
4. Unless noted otherwise, all committee members and positions shall be selected by the elders and communicated to the congregation.

B. Grievances

1. A grievance against paid staff of the church may be brought before the elders by any two members in good standing who are not from the same immediate family (mother, father, spouse, sister, brother, child, grandparent, in-laws and step of the same).
2. If the elders, after thorough investigation and consideration, believe the grievance to be true and substantial, they may administer a verbal or written reprimand.
3. If warranted, the elders may recommend a staff member be terminated at a business meeting. Oral and written notice of said meeting, stating its objective, shall be given from the pulpit and posted in the bulletin two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. Termination will require a ballot vote by a two-thirds majority of members present.

C. Elders - The group of men God has called to shepherd the church by exercising oversight, preaching and teaching the Scriptures, and leading by example.

1. Qualifications

- a. Called by God - Acts 20.28
- b. He desires the position - 1 Timothy 3.1
- c. A man above reproach - 1 Timothy 3.2 (2.12)
- d. If married, faithful to his wife - 1 Timothy 3.1
- e. Sober minded and self controlled - 1 Timothy 3.2
- f. Respectable and hospitable - 1 Timothy 3.2
- g. Able to teach - 1 Timothy 3.2
- h. Not a drunk or violent - 1 Timothy 3.3

- i. Gentle, Not quarrelsome - 1 Timothy 3.3
- j. Not greedy - 1 Timothy 3.3
- k. Manages his home and children well - 1 Timothy 3.4
- l. Not a recent convert - 1 Timothy 3.6
- m. Good reputation with outsiders - 1 Timothy 3.7
- n. Not arrogant or quick tempered - Titus 1.7
- o. Lover of good, upright and holy - Titus 1.8
- p. Disciplined - Titus 1.8
- q. Holds firm to sound doctrine - Titus 1.9

2. Responsibilities

- a. Teach and preach the Scriptures - 1 Timothy 3.2, 5.17
- b. Guard against false doctrine - Titus 1.9
- c. Pray for the church - James 5.14-15
- d. Lead and govern and shepherd - 1 Timothy 5.17-18, 1 Peter 5.1-2
- e. Exercise oversight by example - 1 Peter 5.3
- f. Care for the church - Acts 20.28
- g. Equip the members for the work of ministry - Ephesians 4.11-12

3. Selection Process

- a. A church member in good standing who desires to become an elder must first express his interest to the elders. He would then be interviewed by the elders to decide whether he might be a potential candidate.
- b. Nomination for elder candidacy must be approved unanimously by all elders. If denied candidacy, the elders will communicate reasons for denial to the applicant and possible steps to become qualified in the future.
- c. Once accepted as an elder candidate, the prospective elder will undergo a period of training to adequately prepare him for leadership in the church. Particular attention will be given to potential weak spots in the elder's qualifications or experience.
- d. After training is complete, the elders must approve unanimously whether to present the candidate to the church for approval. If denied recommendation to the congregation, the elders will communicate reasons for denial.
- e. If approved, the elders will present the candidate before the church as a potential elder and allow a period of 4 weeks for the church to bring any concerns about the candidate applying for eldership. The elders will investigate any claims to determine whether those concerns disqualify him.
- f. If the elders do not find any reason for rejecting the man as an elder, a final vote will be taken by the church for approval (requiring a two-thirds vote).
- g. If accepted by the church, the elder will be installed by the laying on of hands.

4. Terms and Affirmation

- a. Every three years after an elder's installment, he shall require a vote of reaffirmation from the church to continue serving as an elder. He may continue serving if he receives a two-thirds or greater vote from the church. If he does not receive affirmation he will step down immediately from office.
- b. As long as an elder receives affirmation he may continue serving if he wishes to do so.

5. Grievances

- a. A grievance against an elder may be brought before the Elders by any two members in good standing who are not from the same immediate family (mother, father, spouse, sister, brother, child, grandparent, in-laws, and step of the same).
- b. The elders will conduct a thorough investigation regarding the charges. If found guilty, the offending elder will receive disciplinary action (up to the removal from office).
- c. The offense and disciplinary action will be communicated to the church in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19-20.

D. Pastors

1. Qualifications

- a. Must be above reproach (Titus 1:6, 1 Timothy 3:2)
- b. Not an adulterer (Titus 1:6, 1 Timothy 3:2)
- c. Heart to disciple his family (Titus 1:6, 1 Timothy 3:4)
- d. Not a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6)
- e. Self-controlled and temperate (Titus 1:7, 1 Timothy 3:4)
- f. Honorable, hospitable, seeking good (Titus 1:7)
- g. Have a good reputation (1 Timothy 3:7)
- h. Not addicted to alcohol (1 Timothy 3:3)
- i. Not greedy (1 Timothy 3:3)
- j. Able to teach sound doctrine (Titus 1:9, 1 Timothy 3:2)
- k. Able to refute false teaching (Titus 1:9)

2. Responsibilities - Pastors are men who shall perform duties that are determined by the elders and approved by the congregation. "Pastor" shall be defined as the Senior Pastor, Assistant Pastor, and Youth Pastor.

- a. **Senior Pastor** - The Senior Pastor will preach the Gospel and have charge of the public worship. With the elders, the Senior Pastor will direct the spiritual welfare of the church.
- b. **Assistant Pastor** - The Assistant Pastor will assist the Senior Pastor in his duties and functions under the direction of the Senior Pastor and the elders.
- c. **Youth Pastor** - The Youth Pastor is responsible for the Youth Ministry under the direction of the Senior Pastor and elders.

3. Selection Process for Pastors

- a. When the Office of Pastor becomes vacant, or if the elders are notified that the Pastor plans to leave his office, the elders shall appoint a search team. The elders will set forth their make up and guidelines subject to the church approval.
- b. When a candidate for Pastor has been selected and presented to the congregation, a special meeting to approve the selection shall be called. Notice will be given by posting a written notice in the vestibule no less than two Sundays preceding the meeting. A ballot vote will be taken at the meeting and approval by three-fourths of members present and voting shall be necessary for election.
- c. The elders will also establish search teams when deemed necessary to interview and recommend candidates to replace the Youth Pastor or Assistant Pastor when those positions become vacant. The elders will recommend final approval by the church.

E. Deacons

1. Qualifications

- a. Must be above reproach (1 Timothy 3:8-9)
- b. Not addicted to alcohol (1 Timothy 3:8)
- c. Not greedy (1 Timothy 3:8)
- d. Actively committed to discipleship within the home (1 Timothy 3:12)
- e. Not an adulterer (1 Timothy 3:12)

2. Responsibilities

- a. Deacons are men and women who assist the leadership of the church by relieving the elders of distractions and pressures that would divert them from prayer and the ministry of the Word. The Deacons' ministry centers around the gift of helps, as described in Acts 6.
- b. Deacons are ready to assist the elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new or existing ministries and the care for the members of the congregation. Possible areas of service include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Overseeing mercy ministry funds to assist those in need and provide aid in times of crisis.
 - ii. Overseeing and participating in the welcoming ministries of the church.
 - iii. Overseeing and participating in the hospitality ministries of the church.
 - iv. Overseeing and participating in visiting and support of the sick and elderly.

F. Church Financial Secretary

1. Responsibilities

- a. He or she shall receive and deposit all money given to the church.
- b. See that a record is kept of all receipts.
- c. Be responsible for the counters of offering money. There shall be a minimum of three counters present at all times in order to proceed with the counting. The counters must be approved by the elders.

G. Clerk

1. Responsibilities

- a. He or she shall keep a correct record of all proceedings of the church at business meetings.
- b. Notify all officers and members of committees and teams of their appointments.
- c. Issue letters of dismissal granted by the church.
- d. Keep an accurate list of members.

H. Missionary Treasurer

1. Responsibilities

- a. He or she is responsible for the receipts and disbursement of all missions money as designated by the donor and/or the Missions Committee.
- b. Make an annual report to the church, or at such other times when requested by the elders.

I. Missions Committee

1. Responsibilities

- a. Plan and promote missions within the church for the purpose of worldwide evangelism.
- b. Recommend missionaries/ministries to the congregation for financial support.

- c. Allocate funds that are designated for missions.
- d. Prepare and present the missions budget at the Annual Meeting.

J. Moderator

1. Responsibilities

- a. The Moderator shall be chosen from the full membership roll of the church.
- b. He or she shall preside over all meetings of the church except meetings that pertain to him, when he or she shall vacate the chair. A Moderator Pro-tem shall be elected to serve when the chair is vacant; an elder will conduct the procedure.
- c. The Moderator shall be responsible for keeping order and conducting the church business meetings in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order.
- d. The Moderator will consult with the elders regarding the agenda of business meeting.

K. Prudential Committee

1. Responsibilities

- a. Serve the congregation under the guidance of the elders by managing church finances, property and a long-term financial plan. This includes overseeing custodial services.
- b. Recommend and oversee the salaries of Pastors and staff members. Recommendations shall be submitted to the elders for final presentation to the congregation.
- c. Compile and evaluate all ministry committee budget inputs for the annual budget to be presented to the elders.
- d. Approve non-budgeted, non-emergency purchases up to \$5,000. A report on all such expenses shall be provided at the following quarterly meeting.
- e. The Prudential Committee shall select the Church Auditor. The Auditor shall audit all accounts of the church and certify in writing if the same are correct and accompanied by proper vouchers and shall present his or her report at the Annual Meeting. The Prudential Committee will approve all fees associated with the Auditor as necessary.
- f. The Prudential Committee shall approve the Treasurer's nomination of the Bookkeeper on a yearly basis. The Bookkeeper shall keep accurate record of the church receipts and expenditures. The Bookkeeper will answer to and provide all financial reports and records as needed to the Treasurer. The Bookkeeper will not have the authority to sign church checks.
- g. The Prudential Financial members shall meet quarterly to manage the church's investments.

L. Treasurer

1. Responsibilities

- a. He or she shall have charge of the funds of the church except for the Missions and Deacons funds.
- b. Make payments only as authorized by the church budget, the elders or the Prudential Committee.
- c. Nominate the Bookkeeper for approval by the elders.
- d. Oversee the Bookkeeper and make sure the Bookkeeper is keeping accurate and current records of all funds, cash receipts, and disbursements of funds using standard bookkeeping practices.

- e. Submit a written report at the Annual Meeting or whenever asked to do so by the Prudential Committee or elders.
- f. The Treasurer shall be a non-voting member of the Prudential Committee.
- g. The Treasurer shall be bonded at the expense of the church in such an amount as the Prudential Committee directs.

ARTICLE 6 - Meetings

A. For Business

- 1. Business meetings of the church shall be held as needed. The elders will determine the agenda for each meeting. The agenda for each meeting will be posted two Sundays before the meeting. Exceptions to the two Sundays minimum can be made in emergency cases.
- 2. Any ministry committee or member of the congregation having items they wish to discuss at a business meeting shall present them to the elders at an elders meeting prior to the business meeting. The elders determine which issues will be included on the agenda for each meeting.
- 3. Each business meeting will be conducted by the Moderator and recorded by a the clerk.
- 4. A quorum of 35 voting members is required. Voting members must be at least 16 years of age.

ARTICLE 7 - Amendments and Suspensions

A. Amendments

- 1. These by-laws may be amended at any business meeting of the church by a two-thirds vote of the members present voting thereon, provided that notice of any proposed amendment has been given to the elders, in writing, at least four weeks before the meeting is to be held in which the amendment will be presented, and provided further, that notice of such proposed amendment shall have been posted not less than fourteen days prior to the date of the meeting and notice, thereof also, shall have been given at the regular worship services on the two Sundays preceding the meeting.

B. Suspensions

- 1. There shall not be any suspension of the by-laws except those approved at a business meeting by two-thirds of those present. The special circumstances shall be described in the record and made part thereof.

ARTICLE 8 - Affiliations

WSBC is affiliated with the Baptist General Conference.

The BGC Statement of Identity reads:

The Baptist General Conference is a fellowship of Baptist Churches whose theology is biblically evangelical; whose character is multi-ethnic; whose spirit is positive and affirmative; whose purpose is to fulfill the Great Commission through evangelism, discipleship and church planting; and whose people celebrate openness and freedom in the context of Christ's Lordship.