

**DECLARATION OF FAITH, COVENANT, CONSTITUTION, AND BY-LAWS**

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## **WEST LYNCHBURG BAPTIST CHURCH**

### **DECLARATION OF FAITH**

#### **I. The Scriptures**

We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God and are the only authoritative standard of religious faith and practice.

But in order to secure a more perfect understanding among ourselves respecting the great doctrines therein revealed and to distinguish ourselves from those who, in our judgment, pervert the gospel or its ordinances, we also profess our belief in the following as among the most important truths taught in the Bible, viz.:

#### **II. The True God**

We believe in the existence of one God, infinite in every natural and moral perfection, who has revealed himself as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

#### **III. The Fall of Man**

We believe that man, being originally created free from sin, has fallen from that state into a state of moral depravity consisting in a wicked love of sin and aversion to God; that all men are sinners, guilty and condemned; and that there is no recovery but in the way that God has appointed.

#### **IV. The Way of Salvation**

We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, eternally pre-existent with the Father, who by the Holy Spirit was born of the Virgin Mary, took upon himself human nature, obeyed the

law, suffered death as a sacrifice for sin, rose from the dead, ascended on high, lives to make intercession and is thus qualified to be an all sufficient Saviour.

#### **V. Freeness of Salvation**

We believe that salvation is freely offered to all and that it is the duty of all to accept it; but it becomes effectual to none but those who repent of sin and believe on Jesus Christ.

#### **VI. Repentance and Faith**

We believe that repentance consists in a sincere sorrow for sin as committed against God and in forsaking all known sin. We believe that faith in Christ consists in a cordial acquiescence in the way of salvation provided by Him, in renouncing every other ground of justification before God and taking Him as the Saviour, the Teacher and Ruler of the soul.

#### **VII. Regeneration**

We believe that such is the native opposition of the human heart to God, that none do savingly believe in Christ until the heart be renewed. We believe that this regeneration is effected by the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the truth and is always followed by holy affections and a godly life.

#### **VIII. The Christian Church**

We believe that a Christian Church is a company of baptized believers voluntarily associated in one place to observe the worship and ordinances enjoined by Christ, its sole Head and Lawgiver. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. We believe that the officers, appointed by Christ for the Church, are Pastors and Deacons.

**IX. The Resurrection**

We believe that Jesus Christ is to come again, judge the nations, fill the earth with His glory and power and that there will be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust, when the wicked will be sentenced to endless punishment, and the righteous welcomed to endless joy, on principle of perfect righteousness.

## **CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; 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, 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 Saviour.

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 Saviour 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.

## CONSTITUTION

### Article 100 - Organization and Purpose

- Section 101** The name of this church shall be the **WEST LYNCHBURG BAPTIST CHURCH** of Lynchburg, Virginia.
- Section 102** The governance of this church shall be by its membership in accordance with the provisions of its Constitution, By-Laws and Amendments.
- Section 103** The purpose for which this church is organized is the support and maintenance of the worship of God, for evangelism and for missionary work pursuant to the faith and principles of the Southern Baptist Convention.

### Article 200 - Membership

- Section 201** The membership of this church shall consist of those persons who have confessed Jesus Christ to be their Saviour and Lord, and who:
- 201.1** Have been examined regarding their Christian experience;
  - 201.2** Have had their letters of transfer and recommendation or substitutes therefor examined;
  - 201.3** Have been accepted by at least two-thirds (2/3) vote of the church members present;
  - 201.4** Have received believer's baptism by immersion;
  - 201.5** Have been accepted by statement or restoration;
  - 201.6** Have entered into Church Covenant as printed in these By-Laws.
- Section 202** Explanation:  
**By Letter**, is meant a letter of transfer from another church of like faith and order.

**By Statement**, is meant reception of one who has received believer's baptism by immersion or has been a member of a church of like faith and order but has lost that membership.

**By Restoration**, is meant restoring to active fellowship one who has previously lost such standing in this church. In all such cases the church must be fully satisfied as to the good intent of such applicant.

**Section 203** Termination of Membership:

**203.1** By death;

**203.2** By letter of transfer when requested by a church of like faith and order by vote of the church;

**203.3** By vote of the church when a member has joined a church of different faith and order;

**203.4** By written request of the member.

**Article 300 - Meetings**

**Section 301** For worship and work, the church shall maintain and foster the meetings and organizations as follows:

**301.1** For worship, preaching, instruction and evangelism, regular meetings for the entire membership shall be held each Lord's Day, morning and evening, and each Wednesday evening. The Lord's Supper shall be observed once each month.

**301.2** For the study and instruction of God's Word, there shall be a Sunday School divided into departments and classes for all ages, to be conducted under the leadership of a Director each Lord's Day morning.

**301.3** For the women of the church there shall be a Woman's Missionary Union, consisting of one (1) or more Women on Mission Groups, with such officers and such forms of organization, including standard auxiliaries and service, as their wisdom may direct, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the teachings of the New Testament, subject to the approval of the church.

- 301.4** For the men of the church there may be organizations with such forms as their wisdom may direct under the leadership of The Holy Spirit and the teachings of the New Testament subject to the approval of the church.
- 301.5** The church shall have annually at least one (1) and if possible two (2) major emphases upon evangelism - revival meetings, etc. The Church Council shall serve as a committee on evangelism working with the Pastor in selecting dates, choosing evangelists, directing preparation and promotion.
- 301.6** The regular morning and evening periods of worship on each Lord's Day and the regular Wednesday evening services shall not be dispensed with unless approved by vote of the church or by consultation of Pastor and Chairman of Deacons in cases of emergency only.
- 301.7** Preschool and Children Councils, separate or combined, shall be elected by the church to counsel and guide the church staff in all matters pertaining to appropriate age level activities.
- 301.8** A Youth Council, elected by and representative of the youth of the church, counseled and guided by adult leaders to be elected by the church upon recommendation from the Church Nominating Committee, shall serve as a planning and correlating committee for all youth activities.

**Section 302** For the transaction of the business of the church the following is provided:

- 302.1** At any of the regular meetings for worship the church may act upon the reception of members, upon termination of membership or upon the appointment of messengers to councils or conventions.
- 302.2** There shall be a business meeting on the second Sunday evening each month.
- 302.3** The Pastor may, or in his absence the Chairman of the Deacons, call from the pulpit special business meetings and shall announce the intent of the same. Likewise, it shall be the duty of the Pastor, or in his absence the Chairman of the Deacons, to call a special business meeting from the pulpit when requested to do so in writing by two-thirds (2/3) of the deacons or upon the written request of 10 percent (10%) of the resident membership plus one-third (1/3) of the active

deacons. No business shall be transacted at such a meeting except that for which the meeting is called.

**302.4** Fifty (50) members shall constitute a quorum for transacting business.

### **Article 400 - Nominating Committees**

**Section 401** There shall be provided three (3) separate committees for the election of the lay leadership.

**Section 402 Sunday School and Missionary Leadership Nominating Committee:**

**402.1** This committee consisting of five (5) members shall be appointed annually by the Pastor, i.e., The Moderator, after consultation with the Chairman of Deacons. No more than three (3) members of this committee shall serve for two (2) consecutive years. This committee shall serve for a period of one (1) year beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**402.2** This committee shall proceed in April to select a Director of Sunday School and Director of Woman's Missionary Union to be presented to the Deacons at the May meeting, after which such nominations shall be presented to the church for election at the regular monthly business meeting in May. Following their nomination and election, the Sunday School Director and Woman's Missionary Union Director shall become participating members of this committee.

**402.3** The duties of this committee shall include nominating the Sunday School leadership and Woman's Missionary Union leadership.

**402.4** Election of Sunday School and Woman's Missionary Leadership. All teachers, administrative personnel and workers shall be elected in the following manner. In August the Sunday School and Missionary Leadership Nominating Committee shall present to the Deacon Fellowship, at their monthly meeting, nominations for all officers, teachers and leaders of the Sunday School and Woman's Missionary Union. These nominations shall be presented to the church for election at the August church business meeting. Those elected shall take office September 1<sup>st</sup> following their election.

**402.5** This committee shall cause verbal or written notice to be given of the election one (1) or more Sundays preceding the election.

**402.6** All vacancies occurring during the year among Sunday School officers and teachers and Woman's Missionary Union personnel shall be filled by election as soon as possible following such vacancy. Nominations for such vacancies shall be made by the Sunday School and Missionary Leadership Nominating Committee. Election shall be in the usual manner.

**Section 403 Church Nominating Committee:**

**403.1** This committee consisting of five (5) members shall be appointed by the Pastor, i.e. Moderator, after consultation with the Chairman of the Deacons. No more than three (3) members of this committee shall serve two (2) consecutive years.

**403.2** The duties of this committee shall include nominating church officers (with the exception of the Pastor and Deacons), committees and church councils, i.e., Preschool, Children, Youth and Adult Councils. This committee shall serve for one (1) year beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>.

**403.3** The Church Nominating Committee shall submit nominations of church officers, (except Pastor and Deacons) standing committees and Preschool, Children, Youth and Adult Councils to the Deacon Fellowship for their consideration at their November meeting. These nominations shall subsequently be presented to the church for their election at the regular church business meeting in November. Those elected shall take office on January 1<sup>st</sup> following their election.

**403.4** This committee shall cause verbal or written notice to be given of the election one (1) or more Sundays preceding the election.

**403.5** All vacancies occurring during the year among church officers, standing committees and councils shall be filled by election as soon as possible following such vacancy. Nominations for such vacancies shall be submitted by the Church Nominating Committee currently serving, and election shall be in the usual manner.

**Section 404 Deacons Nominating Committee:**

- 404.1** This committee consisting of five (5) members shall be appointed in August by the Pastor, i.e., Moderator after consultation with the Chairman of Deacons. These appointees will be presented to the church for approval at the business meeting in August. This committee shall include two (2) Deacons (active or inactive), one (1) of whom will be appointed by the Pastor as Chairman, and three (3) additional members from the church membership, at least two (2) of whom shall be women. This committee shall serve for one (1) year beginning after their election in August. No member may serve more than two (2) consecutive years.
- 404.2** The election of Deacons shall be as follows. The church shall have thirty-three (33) Deacons. As the need may arise the number of Deacons may be changed (increased or decreased) upon a recommendation to and approval by the church membership in a regular business meeting. Deacons shall be elected for a term of three (3) years and after serving a full term shall not be eligible for reelection until one (1) year has passed. In September the Deacons Nominating Committee shall seek the assistance of the church members by requesting they submit in writing the names of individuals whom they consider worthy. The committee shall give consideration to these names and also to names suggested by the committee itself.
- 404.3** Nominees must be above twenty-five (25) years of age, a member of West Lynchburg Baptist Church for more than one (1) year and meet the moral and spiritual standards for Deacons as set forth in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3. After prayerful and thorough consideration the committee shall present to the church the required number of Deacons to be elected. These nominees shall be presented to the church at the regular business meeting in November. The Deacons elected will begin their term of office on January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 404.4** Whenever a vacancy occurs on the active Deacon roster the committee will at the next business meeting present to the church a nominee for election. That person will not be eligible for reelection if he serves more than one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of the three (3) year term.

### **Article 500 - Election of Pastor**

**Section 501** When the office of Pastor becomes vacant, a Pastor Search Committee shall be organized composed of the following: Chairman of Deacons Fellowship, Chairman of Personnel Committee, Sunday School Director and WMU Director. These four (4) persons shall recommend four (4) other members to be elected by the church. If any of the eight (8) members resigns, or is unable to serve on the Pastor Search Committee; other members of the committee may recommend an additional member to be elected by the church. The committee shall elect its own chairman, secretary or any other officers desired.

**501.1** The purpose of this committee shall be to bring to the church a recommendation for an Interim Pastor as needed and subsequently a nomination for a person to serve as Pastor. Pastoral election shall take place at a business meeting called for that specific purpose. When this committee wishes to make a nomination to the church it shall give at least one (1) week written notice to the congregation. It shall bring only one (1) nominee at a time and the election shall be by private ballot. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present and voting shall be necessary to elect.

**Section 502** Should any circumstances arise that would make it necessary for the church to seek to relieve the Pastor, a Deacon or other Officers the matter shall be brought to the attention of the church at a called business meeting for that specific purpose. One (1) week advance notice of the meeting shall be given. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present and voting shall be required to relieve the Pastor. A majority is required to relieve other officers.

### **Article 600 - Officers and Duties**

**Section 601** The officers of this church shall be Pastor, Deacons, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and three (3) Trustees.

**Section 602** Duties of the Pastor:

**602.1** The Pastor shall have charge of the welfare and oversight of the church, shall minister unto the church at all regular and appointed times for worship, and to the individual members whenever possible. He shall be the church moderator and preside at all meetings of the church. In his absence, the Chairman of the Deacons shall be moderator. In case the Pastor and Chairman of the Deacons are both absent, the Vice-Chairman of Deacons shall be moderator. In case all three (3) are absent, the church shall elect a moderator pro tem. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Deacons and of all committees of the church. He shall appoint all committees, except where otherwise directed, but such appointments shall be made in consultation with the Chairman of Deacons.

**602.2** Ministerial staff and support personnel, who shall be called or employed by the church, shall work in closest harmony with and under the general direction of the Pastor. The specific conditions of their work and responsibilities shall be delineated by the Personnel Committee.

**602.3** In the absence of the Pastor, staff and personnel shall be accountable to the Chairman of Deacons or in his absence to the Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

**Section 603** Duties of the Deacons:

**603.1** The Deacons shall serve at all times as the council-of-advice to the Pastor on all matters pertaining to the spiritual and material welfare of the church. They shall assist in the services of the church and its ordinances.

**603.2** The Deacons shall normally meet monthly on the first Monday of each month or on call of the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons, or when requested in writing by at least one-third (1/3) of the active Deacon Fellowship.

**603.3** The Chairman of the Deacons shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the church. One-half (1/2) the membership of the active Deacons shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

**Section 604** Duties of the Trustees:

**604.1** The trustees shall hold the title of property of this church as required by law and discharge such duties as would legally come under their jurisdiction. They shall act solely as the church's legal representatives. As such legal agents they shall not be personally accountable or liable for any litigation in which the church might become involved.

**604.2** One (1) trustee shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years. Having served a previous term shall not disqualify a member for reelection.

**Section 605** Duties of the Treasurer:

**605.1** The treasurer shall oversee receipt and disbursement of all monies. He shall provide a complete record of all funds received and disbursed and report monthly to the church.

**Section 606** Duties of the Clerk:

**606.1** The clerk shall report all requests for change in membership status at church business meetings, shall be responsible for recording the minutes of these meetings and shall maintain a permanent file within the church consisting of all official church records.

**Article 700 - Standing Committees**

**Section 700.1 (Added 4/8/98)**

All standing committees elected according to Article 700 shall meet separately in January each year for the purpose of organizing a functional committee. Each committee shall elect its officer(s) (i.e., chairman, secretary, etc.) from its membership to serve during the current year. This January meeting shall be called by the preceding chairman of each committee. The elected chairman of each committee shall notify the Church office in January, the name(s) of that committee's officers (i.e.) Chairman, Secretary, etc.

**Section 701** The following standing committees of the church shall be elected in accordance with Article 400 - Section 403.3.

- 701.1** Baptismal Committee - This committee shall consist of five (5) members who shall assist candidates immediately prior to and after the Ordinance of Baptism.
- 701.2** Lord's Supper Committee - This committee shall consist of eight (8) members to prepare for the Observance of the Lord's Supper.
- 701.3** Music Committee - This committee shall consist of six (6) members, two (2) elected annually on a rotating basis for three (3) year terms. It shall meet at least once each quarter to assist the Minister of Music. The Minister of Music shall be an ex-officio member.
- 701.4** Hospitality Committee - This committee shall consist of six (6) members to plan for the church hospitality needs and to oversee the kitchens.
- 701.5** Flower Committee - This committee shall consist of five (5) members to arrange for and see that flowers are delivered to the church for the worship services on Sunday. They shall also be responsible for the placement of flowers for special services and shall make whatever disposition necessary.
- 701.6** Church Council Committee - This committee is primarily a correlating and planning group and shall consist of Pastor and Church Staff, the Chairman of Deacons, Director of Sunday School and the Director of Woman's Missionary Union. This committee shall meet each quarter.
- 701.7** Properties and Maintenance Committee - This committee shall consist of a Deacon selected annually by the Deacons and six (6) members, two (2) elected annually on a rotating basis for a three (3) year term. No elected member shall serve longer than a three (3) consecutive year period. The duties of this committee shall include seeing that church property is kept in a clean, useable and attractive condition and supervising the maintenance and cleaning of the church building and grounds.
- 701.8** Stewardship Committee - This committee shall consist of a Deacon selected annually by the Deacons, Church Treasurer and six (6) members, two (2) elected annually from the church on a rotating basis for a three (3) year term. No elected member shall serve longer than a three (3) consecutive year period. All requests

for non-budgeted expenditures of church funds shall be made to this committee, but it shall not be authorized to spend any money, only to make recommendations to the Deacons, and then to the church. It shall be responsible for the preparation of the annual budget and any stewardship promotions.

- 701.9** Library and Media Committee - This committee shall consist of four (4) members, two (2) of whom are elected annually to serve a two (2) year term. It shall maintain and supervise the development and use of the facilities that are a normal part of a good media center.
- 701.10** Usher Committee - This committee shall consist of a chairman, co-chairman and as many additional persons as are needed to perform duties necessary for the comfort of the congregation and to assist at all services of worship.
- 701.11** Teller Committee - This committee shall consist of at least twenty-four (24) members elected annually. Their duties shall include accounting for and depositing church receipts.
- 701.12** History Committee - This committee shall consist of two (2) members elected annually who shall provide a written annual summary of historical events.
- 701.13** Personnel Committee - This committee shall consist of a Deacon selected annually by the Deacons and six (6) members, two (2) elected annually on a rotating basis for a three (3) year term. No elected member shall serve longer than a three (3) consecutive year period, except when elected after having served an unexpired term. This committee shall assist the church in matters related to employee personnel administration. Its duties include setting policies, job descriptions and regulations governing employment, recommending to the church all candidates for employment, recommending salaries and benefits to the Stewardship Committee annually, acting as arbitrator in matters of grievances between any church employees and evaluating personnel performances annually.
- 701.14** Endowment Committee - This committee shall consist of the Church Treasurer and six (6) members elected from the church. The members shall be elected on a rotating basis, two (2) elected each year for a three (3) year term and shall remain

off this committee for one (1) year before being eligible for reelection. This committee shall elect its officers from the elected members.

This committee is to manage the Endowment Fund for the purpose of deriving income to be spent for mission projects in accordance with the following definition of Missions: “A specific task, when performed by Christians, enables them to share the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.”

All assets are to be invested with the Virginia Baptist Foundation, with all amounts received from contributions to be invested in Cash and/or Fixed Income investments; and all amounts derived from dividends, interest or fund appreciation to be invested in either the Balanced fund or the Growth fund, at the committee’s discretion.

Five percent (5%) of the total Endowment Fund balance at December 31 of each year may be spent for Missions in the next year, to be taken only from the outstanding balance of dividends interest or fund appreciation. No expenditures may be made from the invested balance of principal (contributions). The Endowment Committee will establish procedures of submitting applications for Missions expenditures each year, and will report to the church the expenditure of funds for Missions.

Any portion of the 5 percent (5%) annual amount that is not spent will be given to the Lottie Moon or Annie Armstrong Offerings. No portion of the fund or the income from the fund shall be applied to the General Budget. The committee shall be authorized to control the fund for the purpose of deriving income for the Endowment Program. In the event the program is terminated, the monies shall be used for legitimate mission causes approved by the church.

**701.15** Audit Committee - This committee shall include two (2) members from the Stewardship Committee, appointed annually by the Chairman of the Stewardship Committee; serving with three (3) members from the general church membership, recommended by the Church Nominating Committee and elected by the church annually. One of the members to be elected shall be designated as Chairman by

the Church Nominating Committee. The committee shall be responsible for an annual audit of church financial records, which they shall have performed by a public accounting firm at least once every five years, with the committee conducting the audit in other years.

**Section 702** Committees other than those listed herein may be appointed by the Pastor and/or Chairman of Deacons and elected by the church. Their services shall be terminated when they have accomplished the purpose for which they were elected.

### **Article 800 - Church Finances**

**Section 801** The current expenses of the church, and the regular offerings to missions, education and benevolence shall be provided for in the annual budget.

**Section 802** It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular proportionate gifts. (1 Corinthians 16:2). Each member shall be encouraged in scriptural giving. All offerings shall be free-will but the church expects every member who is able to contribute toward the expenses of its program.

### **Article 900 - By-Laws**

**Section 901** The order of business at all regular meetings shall be as follows:

Call to order by Moderator;

Prayer;

Reading of Minutes;

Receive letters of transfer from sister churches;

Grant letter of transfer to those churches of like faith and order asking for them;

Hear Clerk's report;

Hear Treasurer's report and any reports from organizations;

Hear the reports of Standing Committees;

Hear the reports of Special Committees;

Recommendations from the Deacons;

Old Business;

New Business;

Adjournment.

- 901.1** No motion shall be entertained until the one under consideration has been disposed of, except motions to amend, postpone, lay on the table, adjourn or call the question.
- 901.2** Any member who wishes to speak shall seek recognition and respectfully address the Moderator.
- 901.3** No member shall speak more than twice upon the same subject, except by permission.
- 901.4** Upon all points of order a member may appeal the decision of the Moderator to the church, whose decision shall be final. All appeals from the decision of the Moderator must have two (2) seconds.
- 901.5** All questions shall be decided by a majority of votes, except in cases specified in the Constitution.
- 901.6** All propositions presented for action by the church must be introduced by a motion of one (1) member, in writing if requested, and seconded by another.
- 901.7** Propositions presented by a committee do not require a second.

#### **Article 1000 - Amendments**

- Section 1001** All amendments to the Declaration of Faith, Covenant, Constitution and By-laws shall be submitted in writing at a regular meeting, shall lay on the table until the next regular meeting and shall only be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all members present.