



**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
WRIGHTSDALE BAPTIST CHURCH
(FINAL)**

April 11, 2014

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS WRIGHTSDALE BAPTIST CHURCH

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this Constitution and By-Laws to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This Constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

NAME & AFFILIATION

This body shall be known as the WRIGHTSDALE BAPTIST CHURCH, Peach Bottom, Pennsylvania, affiliated with the South Central Baptist Association, the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

This body accepts as Articles of Faith the "The Baptist Faith and Message", current edition, of the Southern Baptist Convention.

CHURCH COVENANT

We, the members of the Wrightsdale Baptist Church, Peach Bottom, Pennsylvania, having been led as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into a covenant with each other as one body in Christ.

We therefore agree, by the help of the Holy Spirit and with the Bible, the inspired Word of God as our guide, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church; to promote spirituality; to sustain its worship, discipline and doctrine; to observe the church ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper as authorized by our local church; to faithfully attend its services of worship; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly of God's tithes and our offerings to support the ministry of our church and the spread of the gospel to all nations.

We agree to encourage personal and family devotions; to educate our children according to our faith; to seek the salvation of the unbeliever; to be just in our dealings, reliable in our responsibilities, and an example to those around us; to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God; and to be zealous in our attempts to advance the kingdom of our Savior by witnessing in words and actions.

We agree to walk in Christian harmony and watchfulness, giving and receiving assistance with meekness and affection; to pray for one another; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to be slow to get angry; to always be eager for reconciliation, seeking it without delay. In case of differences of opinion in the church,

we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We further agree that, when we move from this area, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church of like faith and practice where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

CHARACTER

Section I

Governance: The government of this church resides solely in the local body of believers. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body or any board of directors, but it recognizes the voluntary cooperation which is common practice among Southern Baptist churches.

Section II

Doctrine: The church recognizes the King James Version (all editions) of the Bible as our preferred English translation and as authority on all questions of faith, discipline and practice.

Section III

Corporation: Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the church trustees shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes of the corporation in such manner, or to such organization(s) organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization(s) under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Code), namely, the South Central Baptist Association and the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey, jointly.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

Section I

Qualifications: The membership of this church shall consist of persons who confess Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord, have been baptized by immersion and have been accepted by vote of the church or, if coming from other churches of like faith and practice (as referenced in Articles of Faith in this Constitution), upon letter of transfer or satisfactory substitutes thereof. Any person coming from another denomination, unless the church from which they come is of like faith and practice, must come for baptism upon profession of faith in Christ as Savior.

Section II

Duties: Members are expected to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life, to attend the services of this church, to give regularly of tithes and offerings, to support its causes, to serve faithfully, and, to the best of one's abilities, live according to the Holy Scriptures and the Church Covenant.

Section III

Voting: Only Wrightsdale Baptist Church members may act and vote in the transactions of the church business. Non-members will not be permitted to vote.

Quorum: Ten percent of the active membership, as reported by the church clerk, shall constitute a quorum, except for the election of a pastor which requires twenty-five percent.

Section IV

Status of Membership: The continuance of membership shall be based upon the acceptance of the Articles of Faith and Church Covenant in this Constitution.

- a) Any member of Wrightsdale Baptist Church who desires a letter of transfer and recommendation to any other church of like faith and practice is entitled to receive same upon request.
- b) The Church may, after due notice and kindly effort by the Pastor and Deacons, place on an inactive roll the membership of persons for the space of one year non-resident, or for the same space of time not habitually worshipping with the church.

Section V

Termination:

- a) **By Death** - When a member of the church dies, his or her name shall be removed from the membership roll.
- b) **By Transfer** – Any member seeking to leave the membership of this church to become a member of another Baptist church of like faith and practice, should seek to do so by means of transfer to the other church. When it is so requested in writing, the church may grant to a member in good standing a letter of transfer to the other Baptist church, by vote at a business meeting.
- c) **By Resignation** – If a member, who is in good standing, decides that he or she desires to resign their membership, that member is encouraged to seek counsel from the Pastor and or deacon leadership. If after careful consultation, he or she wants to resign, the resignation will be accepted by the church membership.
- d) **By Exclusion** – If a member ceases to attend the stated meetings of the church without showing just cause or if upon relocation ceases to maintain a vital contact with the church, he or she may be excluded from the membership. In such cases, the deacons shall try to contact the person and resolve the situation. With such, the church may proceed with disciplinary procedures outlined in Article VI, Discipline. Further, if a member does not reaffirm his or her basic agreement with qualifications and duties in these By-Laws, he or she may be excluded.
- e) **By Removal** – If it is known and confirmed that a member has become a member of another Baptist church without first seeking a transfer or joins a Non-Baptist denomination church, the member shall be removed from the membership roll, after a three-fourths vote at a business meeting and so informed of such.
- f) **By Disciplinary Action** - According to the teaching of Holy Scripture, a congregation must cut off from its fellowship and membership any person who teaches or insists on holding heretical doctrine, who conducts himself or herself in a manner inconsistent with the Church Covenant, or who persists in disturbing the unity, peace, or purity of the church. The procedure to be followed in such disciplinary action is set forth in Article VI, Discipline. Termination of membership by disciplinary action must have the approval of at least three-fourths of the members present and voting.

ARTICLE II – CHURCH OFFICERS

PASTOR

Election, Termination and Dismissal

- a) A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His qualifications shall be as identified in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. His election shall take place at a meeting called for such purpose, of which at least fifteen days notice shall be given. A Pastor Search committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and their recommendation will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. The election shall be by ballot, and seventy-five percent affirmative votes of those members present shall be required. The pastoral candidate is to be informed as to what majority he carried.
- b) The pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by mutual consent between him and the church body or by dismissal of seventy-five percent vote of the church body. A minimum of thirty-days written notice should be given by either party. Immoral acts are grounds for immediate termination without notices or pay.
- c) As an employee of the church, the Pastor must understand that his employment is a God ordained vocation. In this regard, the Pastor must fully support and live consistently and in accordance with the Articles of Faith and Christian standards of living. Failure to adhere to the standards set forth above and in the Constitution and By-Laws will be reason for dismissal.

Duties

He shall have charge of the welfare and oversight of the church. He shall preside at all business meetings unless stated elsewhere. The Pastor shall be the ex-officio head of all church organizations.

DEACONS

Section I

Qualifications, Number, Election, and Term of service:

- a) Qualifications: Deacons must meet the requirements as given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Membership of at least two (2) years is required before a man can be considered as a deacon. No deacon shall be ordained by this church that does not practice tithing.
- b) Number and procedure of election is to be determined by the church. Those elected shall serve until such service is terminated by the church, or until he resigns or moves away. In case of death, removal, incapacity to serve, or the termination of service by the church, the church may elect to fill the place left vacant. It shall be appropriate for the church to promote to honorary life membership any deacon who by reason of

age or infirmities shall, after honorable service, be no longer able to render active service. There is no obligation to constitute as deacon a brother who comes to the church from another church where he has served as deacon.

- c) Following the election of an unordained man to the office of deacon, the church shall call for his ordination at the earliest possible time.

Section II

Duties:

- a) The deacons shall be zealous to guard “the unity of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3) within the church in the bonds of peace.
- b) They shall serve as a council of advice and conference with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church.
- c) They are to establish and maintain Christlike relations with all the members of the church. This does not delegate to the deacons the right of authority over members of this church, but is to be advisory in nature only.
- d) In counsel with the pastor, and by such methods as the Holy Spirit may direct in accordance with the New Testament teaching, they are to have the responsibility of the discipline of the church. In administering such, they are to be guided always by the principles set forth in Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians 5:9-13, and I Thessalonians 5:12-14.
- e) The deacons shall serve as a general Pastor Search committee until a separate pastor search committee is appointed by the church. In any period when the church is without a pastor, the deacons will oversee church ministries and arrange for guest speakers. At no time shall any person occupy the pulpit of this church that is not in complete agreement with the Articles of Faith and the Church Covenant.

Section III

Methods of Procedure: The deacons shall be organized as a unit and shall meet once a month, if possible, at a time to be agreed upon by them. They shall elect a Chairman who will serve for a period of two years; eligible for a second two year term. The Chairman’s term of office will be synchronous with the fiscal year of the church. Each deacon shall freely confer with the pastor about all matters and cases of discipline which, in his judgment, would be more wisely and spiritually handled in private.

MODERATOR

The pastor shall be the moderator of the church. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of the deacons shall preside. In the absence of the pastor and the chairman of the deacons, the clerk shall call the church to order. In absence of all of the above, any member of the church in

good standing may call the church to order and proceed with the election of a moderator, pro tem.

CLERK

The clerk shall keep, in a suitable format, a record of all the actions of the church, unless stated elsewhere. He/she shall keep a register of the names of the members, with the dates of admission, and termination together with a record of baptisms. He/she shall issue letters of transfer and termination voted by the church and shall preserve on file all communications and written official reports. All such records are considered the property of the church.

TREASURER

The treasurer and/or church designated tellers shall receive and manage all tithes and offerings. The treasurer shall receive and pay out, upon approval of the church, money given to the church, keeping always an itemized account of all receipts and all disbursements. The Church may approve the management of special funds by someone other than the Treasurer, if deemed necessary. All funds received for denominational or other causes shall be paid at least once a month. A monthly report shall be presented to the church at its regular business meeting.

All books, records, and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be considered the property of the church. The books shall be open to inspection at all times by any member of Wrightsdale Baptist Church. When a successor is elected, the treasurer shall promptly deliver to the active treasurer all books, records, and accounts in his/her hands pertaining to his/her office.

ARTICLE III - CHURCH STRUCTURE

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS/COMMITTEES

All organizations/committees of the church shall be under church control. The leadership and members of church organizations/committees shall be elected by the church. They shall be presented by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church with the leader of each reporting regularly to the church. Any new or additional church structure must be presented to and voted on by the church as well as modifications to existing church structure. The pastor is ex-officio member of all the organizations named, and his leadership is to be recognized by them all.

TRUSTEES

The Church trustees elected by the church will hold in trust the property of the church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing such an action.

ARTICLE IV – CHURCH FINANCE

Section I

This church recognizes and adopts the scriptural methods of tithes and offerings as its only plan of finance. Individuals are always permitted to designate the manner in which their gifts are to be distributed.

Section II

All funds shall pass through the hands of the treasurer and shall be properly recorded, unless the church shall indicate otherwise.

Section III

It is understood that membership in this church involves a financial obligation to support the church and its causes. Each member shall be encouraged to tithe.

Section IV

The fiscal year of the church shall be 01 September to 31 August. An annual budget shall be submitted and approved by a majority vote of the membership prior to the beginning of the Fiscal Year.

ARTICLE V - CHURCH MEETINGS

Section I

- a) Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day and on some regular weekday evening each week, preferably Wednesday.
- b) The ordinances of the church, baptisms and Lord's Supper, shall be observed at such times as the Pastor and or Deacons direct.
- c) Occasional religious meetings may be scheduled by the pastor at his discretion or by vote of the church.
- d) The church shall endeavor to conduct revival meetings as they feel that the Lord may lead, and when possible, cooperate in other evangelistic efforts of Local, State and Southern Baptist Convention organizations.

Section II

- a) At any regular meeting for worship, the church may act upon the reception of members, the transfer of members to other churches, and/or the appointment of messengers to the Southern

Baptist Convention and/or the local association. No other business will be conducted at any regular meeting for worship unless the church declares an emergency.

- b) A special business meeting may be called by the Pastor, Deacons, Trustees, and/or upon the written request to the church clerk by five (5) adult members. The purpose of the meeting shall be read at the service on the Lord's Day preceding the day scheduled for such meeting.
- c) The monthly business meeting of the church shall be held on the second Wednesday of each month or as best fits into the church calendar.
- d) Robert's Rules of Order (current edition) shall govern all business sessions of the church.

ARTICLE VI – DISCIPLINE

Section I

Should any divisive issue arise between members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in Chapter 18 of Matthew.

Section II

The deacons shall endeavor to resolve any matter of gross breach of the Church Covenant or a public scandal occurring by a member. If the matter cannot be resolved, they shall report the complaint to the church in writing.

Section III

If the church votes to entertain the complaint, it shall appoint a reasonable time and place of hearing and shall notify the person in question thereof, furnishing him/her a copy of the charges.

Section IV

At such a hearing, the accused member may call to his/her aid any member of the church as counsel. If he/she cannot be present at the appointed time or give satisfactory evidence for his/her neglect to do so, the church may proceed in his/her absence.

Section V

All such proceedings shall be conducted in a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, and should an adverse decision be reached, the church may proceed to admonish or proceed with termination by disciplinary action as stated in Article I Section V, the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended, revised, or changed by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any meeting specifically called for the purpose. Any proposed change shall be provided to the church in writing, not less than one month before the time of the proposed action.

Adopted by vote of the Wrightsdale Baptist Church in business meeting – April 2014.