

Willamette Valley Baptist Church

Constitution and Bylaws

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**Constitution
Of
Willamette Valley Baptist Church
Salem, Oregon**

Article I

Name

The Name of this church organization shall be called Willamette Valley Baptist Church of Salem, Oregon, and Oregon Corporation.

Article II

Purpose

The purpose and mission of this Church shall be to strive by the help of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit, to carry out the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ as stated in Matthew 28:18-20, and also:

- A. Every member shall be urged and expected not only to assist others in taking the Gospel of Salvation to the lost, but will be expected to go personally after having been instructed and led of the Lord in so doing.
- B. After having led the lost to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and upon having received Him as Lord and Savior the converts shall be instructed as to their duty to confess Christ in Baptism by immersion in water.
- C. New converts shall also be instructed and taught in matters of Christian conduct, Bible study, Church attendance, Soul-winning, giving faithfulness to Christ, and any other Scriptural principle which will benefit their growth in Christ.
- D. The means employed in carrying out the above shall be regular Church services, prayer meetings, revivals, and Bible conferences, visitation, home and foreign missions, distribution of literature, and any other means deemed honorable, wise and effective.

Article III

Authority

The Holy Scriptures shall be the final authority on matters relating to faith and practice by the members of this Church as they are written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Article IV

Government

Section 1

The church is an independent body of baptized believers. The government of this church is vested in its assembled membership through elected officers, and is not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body, and no denominational or associational representatives shall sit in judgment over its affairs. No rules, regulations, or commitments shall be made to such bodies which call for more than voluntary action on the part of this church or any portion of its membership. Any association with any ecclesiastical governing body can be established by a 3/4 majority of the members present at a church meeting in accordance with rules as stated herein.

Section 2

The instrument of government for this church shall be the Holy Bible. The affairs of business shall be conducted in accordance with the Word of God. Anything specific that is not directly addressed by the Holy Bible or the Constitution of the Willamette Valley Baptist Church shall be at the discretion of the Pastor. The procedures, qualifications, and rules of order for this church are herein set forth, and shall be known as the CONSTITUTION OF THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH—SALEM, OREGON, INC.

Article V

Finance

Scriptural giving is an expression of love for the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, it shall be voluntary. Tithes and offerings shall be the method used to care for the financial needs of this church. (I Cor. 16:2)

Article VI

Inner-Organizations

Every organization or society within this church shall be an integral part of the church and not an entity of itself. They shall therefore, have as their aims and objectives that of assisting the church in discharging the obligation and responsibilities which it has imposed upon itself, rather than having separate aims and objectives which always acts as divisive forces. The Pastor or his designated staff or church member shall preside over all such organizations or societies.

Article VII

Membership

Section 1

Membership in Willamette Valley Baptist Church may be acquired in the following ways:

- A. BAPTISM—any person who evidences a change of attitude toward God, and by faith as the son of God who died and shed His blood upon the cross to atone for his sins, and accepts His as his own Savior, and with all his heart is willing to obey Him and His Word, may by vote of the Church and by scriptural baptism be received into membership.

- B. LETTER—any person to whom the ordinance of baptism by immersion has been scripturally administered according to church doctrine, and satisfactory statement of faith in Christ, may be received into membership upon the vote of the Church.

- C. EXPERIENCE—any person to whom the ordinance of baptism by immersion has been scripturally administered according to Church doctrine, and satisfactory statement of faith in Christ, may be received into membership upon the vote of the Church.

- D. RESTORATION—any person whose membership has been terminated, may upon public confession of their sins or errors, after said confession that reveals faithfulness in attendance, Christian Spirit, and liberality in stewardship, call for a special meeting with the Pastor and Deacons, wherein it shall be frankly and fully discussed as to the individual's future intentions and relationship to the church. Should the results of said meeting be satisfactory, the Pastor may cause said part to be recommended to the Church for membership. No restored member shall hold office for a period of two (2) years following restoration.

- E. MEMBERSHIP DENIAL—No person shall be admitted to membership of this church to whom three (3) unrelated members object, casting their votes in the negative. In the event of objection, said person shall be referred to the Deacon Board. Such voters shall, at that time, or in a later meeting, state the reasons for such objections. If objections are not valid, said person may be again presented for membership.

Section 2

Membership in this church may be dissolved in the following ways:

- A. Death—At a regular church meeting, the Church clerk shall be caused to indicated of the Church roll that said member is deceased.

- B. Letter of transfer to a sister Baptist Church of like faith and practice.

- C. Inactivity for an extended period of time (3months or more) shall be cause to drop someone from the permanent membership roll. This shall occur after the inactive member has been contacted by letter.
- D. Participation in or a consent to the purposes of an unauthorized meeting or secret meeting with members of the church shall be cause for removal from the regular church roll.

Section 3

General duties of the members of this church shall be to acquire Bible knowledge, to progress spiritually, put away questionable habits and to live a life that would honor the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthen His church. It is the duty of the members to cultivate brotherly love for all the other members of the church and to show this love by using all proper measures to promote their spiritual benefit and prosperity. It is the duty of members to honor and highly esteem their Pastor (I Thess. 5:12-13); to pray for him (II Thess. 3:1-2); to submit to him in the scriptural exercise of his Holy Spirit given authority (Acts 20:28, Heb. 13:7, 17); to guard his reputation; to contribute toward his support according to their ability. Toward those outside the membership, it is the duty of members upon moving from the area to unite with another church of like faith and practice, requesting said church to send to the Willamette Valley Baptist Church for their letter of recommendation of dismissal.

Article VIII

Church Officers and Their Duties

Section 1

Pastor: Duties and Qualifications

- A. The word Pastor means a shepherd or spiritual overseer. The scriptures refer to the office commonly called pastor, as elder or bishop. I Tim. 3:1-5, I Peter 5:1-4, I tim. 5:17, I Thess. 5:12-13, Acts 20:28, Heb. 13:7, 17 are examples of such and show how clearly that the pastor is to oversee and supervise the affairs of the church. He shall not only have the general supervision of the church, but shall have unrestricted liberty in presenting any matter he deems necessary to the church for its consideration and instruction.
- B. It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach regularly at the church, to administer the ordinances of the gospel, and to perform the various duties incumbent upon his office.
- C. He shall be the moderator of the church and preside at all its church meetings, exofficio member of all the committees and organizations which include the privilege of voting; in charge of the pulpit and responsible for supplying the speakers. In legal matters shall act as president.

- D. I Tim. 3:1-6 and Titus 1:7-9 give the qualifications for a pastor. The life of the Pastor and his family should be an example of godliness and spirituality. They should not indulge in worldly or sinful practices which would tend to weaken the testimony of this church (I Thess. 5:22). No one who uses intoxicating liquors, drugs, or tobacco in any form; or who belongs to a secret society; or who brings disrepute upon his ministry through sinful language, practice or associations shall be considered for pastor or having fallen into such, be retained as pastor. (Rom. 12:1-2, II Cor 6:11-18).
- E. Because of the office, the Pastor shall be counted worthy of double honor (I Tim. 5:17). No accusations shall be brought against him without two or three witnesses (I Tim. 5:19).
- F. No person shall be considered for the office nor serve as Pastor of this church whose beliefs and teachings are not in accordance with the Word of God, or who will not declare himself to be in full agreement with the doctrinal statements herein stated.
- G. No person shall be considered for the office nor serve as Pastor who maintains any connection with the National Council of Churches or any of its agencies; convention or other ecclesiastical body or bodies; Masonic lodges or secret organizations.
- H. The Pastor shall be a man.
- I. The term of the Pastor shall be for an indefinite period, whether so stated in the call or not. Termination of the Pastor's services shall be left to him as God shall lead and a period of 30- days notice will be given prior to his resignation. The Pastor's salary shall be reviewed on an annual basis by the Board of Deacons.
- J. The Church may dismiss the Pastor for the following grounds; sinful conduct, unscriptural teaching, or in the event that the Pastor is at fault, the Board of Deacons shall select a committee of at least three deacons to counsel with the Pastor. If there is just cause for his leaving, and after presenting the matter in a scriptural manner as outlined in Matt. 18:15-18, this committee may bring the matter to the attention of the Church. If the Pastor refuses to resign, and after public announcement for at least two Sundays, the church may vote to dismiss the Pastor.
- K. Severance Pay in the amount of two (2) weeks pay will be allowed if dismissal is for sinful conduct, all other dismissals will allow four (4) weeks' pay.

Section 2

Pastor's Call

Whenever it is necessary, by the death or resignation of the Pastor, the church shall, WITHOUT UNNECESSARY DELAY, proceed to secure a new Pastor in the following Manner:

- A. The Board of Deacons shall serve as the Pulpit Committee. This committee shall be a committee of necessity and not a standing committee. If the Pastor resigns or dies the committee shall automatically be activated.. If the Pastor has been dismissed the committee shall be activated immediately. The Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall serve as the Chairman of the Pulpit Committee unless he shall appoint another Deacon to hold that responsibility.
- B. The pulpit committee shall meet and elect one of its members to contact and invite to the pulpit of the church some minister of good report and who is in accordance with and meets the requirements of the Scripture. He shall be given a copy of this constitution and asked for his answer an documents in accordance with the doctrinal beliefs of this church. There shall be an interview with the prospective pastor and his wife. No person shall be invited to the pulpit of this church without the majority vote of the pulpit committee. The committee's direction shall come after much prayer and seeking the will of God.
- C. The arrival of a candidating Pastor shall be announced one week in advance if at all possible. It is the responsibility of the congregation, the Board of Deacons, and the Pulpit Committee to prayerfully seek the will of God as we evaluate the candidate. It shall be the objective of the pulpit committee to provide the congregation with several men (2 or 3) as candidates for new pastor and after such time the pulpit committee shall recommend to the congregation, at a scheduled church meeting, one of the men for a vote to send a formal call to fill the pastorate. The vote shall be done by secret ballot and a call to fill the position of Pastor shall be extended if the candidate receives 3/4 majority vote of the qualified members present.
- D. The pulpit committee shall consider, but not be restricted to, those qualifications herein listed for the pastor, and shall also consider his reputation, his experience, and his education.

Section 3

Deacon: Duties and Qualifications

- A. Deacon means attendant or to wait upon. It also means to run errands, to attend, a waiter, specifically to a Christian teacher or Pastor. The office of deacon shall not in any way be taken to mean authority over the church or pastor.
- B. The Deacons shall assist the pastor in building the church numerically, financially, and spiritually. They must visit the sick, the sorrowing, and the needy. It shall also be their responsibility to care for the Pastor's needs.
- C. The life of a deacon and his family should be one of godliness and spirituality. They should not indulge in worldly and sinful practices which would tend to weaken the testimony of this church. Each deacon should meet the scriptural qualifications as listed in I Tim. 3:8-13 and Titus 1:7-8.
- D. No person shall be elected to the office of Deacon who has not been a faithful member of the church for a period of one year or more. A deacon is to be faithful in all things (I Tim. 3:11), therefore absenteeism from two regular church or deacon's meetings or two months of church attendance without a legitimate excuse shall disqualify said deacon and his office shall be declared vacant.
- E. Deacons shall be elected at church meeting for a period of 2 years.
- F. Paid staff members shall not be eligible for the Board of Deacons.

Section 4

Appointed Positions

Positions such as the Sunday School Superintendent, Head Usher, and like positions which are not paid positions will be appointed by the Pastor. The positions of Assistant or Associate Pastor, Secretary, Music Director, and Youth Director shall also be appointed by the Pastor. It is expected that the Pastor will consult the Board of Deacons for advice and consultation in these matters and that they together will seek the will of God in much prayer. All positions, paid or volunteer, shall be subject to the same requirements listed for the Pastor and Deacons as herein stated.

Article IX

Church Meeting

Section 1

Annual Church Meeting

- A. The annual church meeting for the election of officers and the reading of the annual reports shall be held on any stipulated date announced at least two Sundays in advance, between November 1 and the second Sunday in January, and all retiring officers shall relinquish their positions and all newly elected officers shall assume their responsibilities on the first Sunday in February following the election.
- B. The Deacon Board shall nominate men of good report for those offices open in the church. These men shall be interviewed by the Pastor before their names are placed on the ballot for vote by the membership. The list of nominees shall be submitted to the Pastor for his approval. He shall have the privilege of taking any name off the list he feels is not qualified for the responsibility.
- C. Reports—the Chairman of the Deacons shall be the church clerk and shall bring the membership roll up to date prior to the annual election, and give a report to the church at that time of the number received and withdrawn and the number of the present roll. The church treasury report shall also be given including total receipts, expenditures, and indebtedness of the church. The Sunday School Superintendent shall give a report of the work and progress of the Sunday School for the past year. All other committees appointed or elected shall be prepared to present any pertinent information requested by the Pastor.
- D. Any reports prepared by the church staff for the annual church meeting shall be presented to the Pastor for his review at least five (5) working days before they are presented to the church.

Section 2

Special Church Meetings

- A. Special church meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor at any regular Sunday Church service. If the purpose of the meeting is to discuss selling of church property, amending the constitution, for the mortgaging of property, it shall not be voted on for two weeks so as to provide opportunity for the membership to carefully and prayerfully consider the decision.
- B. The sale of church property, mortgaging of church property, or a change in the constitution shall take a 2/3 vote of the attending qualified membership at the meeting.

- C. A special meeting may be called by any member of the church in the following manner:
1. A petition stating clearly the purpose, date, and time of the meeting and the name or names of the petitioner shall be drawn by the church clerk and signed by him.
 2. Said petition shall then be signed by three (3) elected officers of the church, a majority of the regular Sunday School teachers, three (3) members at large who are at least 21 years old, and who are not related in any way to each other or the petitioner.
 3. Said petition shall then be posted by the church clerk and read from the pulpit for two consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting.

Section 3

Church Meeting Quorum

A quorum shall consist of twelve (12) voting members, or 1/4 of the regular voting members present in the matter of calling a pastor, mortgaging or selling church property, or amending the constitution. In such cases it shall be at least 1/4 of the regular voting membership on the church roll.

Section 4

Voting Qualifications

A member shall be a qualified voter at church meeting if they shall have reached their eighteenth birthday and are an active tithing member.

Section 5

Simple Majority

A majority vote of the voting members present and voting at any called church meeting shall be required unless otherwise stipulated in the constitution.