

THE CONSTITUTION OF WILDWOOD COMMUNITY CHURCH

ARTICLE I. Statement of Faith

Our full doctrinal statement shall serve as our Statement of Faith.

ARTICLE II. Government

The Lord Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the Supreme Head of the Church, and the Scripture is recognized as the standard which governs the practices of the Church. Since the New Testament assigns to Elders the responsibility to oversee the local assembly (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-3; 1 Timothy 5:17-20; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5), the government of this church shall be designated as Elder Rule with Congregational Affirmation. This means that the Elders shall comprise the ruling body of the church and shall have the authority to act in behalf of the church. All matters of the church shall be under the jurisdiction of the Elders, who shall serve as the Board of Trustees. Whenever major issues are under consideration (including the purchase of real estate; expansion of the physical plant; and selection of Elders, Deacons and pastoral staff), the Elders shall seek input and affirmation from the local fellowship on said issue, prayerfully and carefully considering before the Lord all congregational opinion before making a final determination. Congregational input in other decisions shall be sought at the judicious discretion of the Elders.

A. Church Officers

1. Elders

a. Duties - The central focus of the Elders shall be to devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word, and their duties shall include the following:

- (1) To equip the saints for the work of the ministry.
- (2) To shepherd the church without compulsion nor for sordid gain, taking care not to misuse the authority allotted to them.
- (3) To be examples to the church in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.
- (4) To guide and protect the purity of life and doctrine in the church, providing for the discipline of erring members when such is deemed necessary.
- (5) To establish policies and determine practices for the church.

b. Qualifications - There shall be the following criteria for Elders:

- (1) They must conform to the moral and spiritual qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- (2) They must be in agreement with the Statement of Faith** (see Article I).

In addition, prospective candidates must be members of Wildwood and must have demonstrated the ability to serve in the shepherding ministry of the church, in accordance with I Timothy 5:22.

c. Number - There shall be no prescribed number of Elders.

d. Selection - The Elders shall seek input from the local fellowship in identifying candidates. After prayerful deliberation by the Board of Elders and upon their unanimous consensus, the prospective candidate(s) shall be presented before the congregation for its consideration. A minimum period of two weeks shall be allotted for this consideration. If in the unanimous opinion of the Board of Elders the candidate has been substantially affirmed by the congregation, he shall be appointed as an Elder.

e. Term of Appointment - Except for the Senior Pastor (main preaching pastor) and Executive Pastor, Elders shall be appointed to a term of three years. A newly appointed Elder will be evaluated near the end of his first year of service by the remaining members of the Board of Elders; If it is the unanimous determination of the remaining members of the Board that it is in the best interest of the congregation that he should not continue, then his appointment will be terminated on the anniversary date and this shall be announced to the congregation.

At the end of the initial three-year term his appointment may be extended for another three year term if there is mutual agreement on this by the Elder and the remaining members of the Board of Elders, and if this is affirmed by the congregation.

After completion of a second three year term no Elder can be reappointed until at least one year has passed. The selection procedure for reappointment shall be the same as the selection procedure for appointment.

f. Termination - An Elder shall be removed from office upon any of the following:

- (1) Death
- (2) Resignation
- (3) Disqualification: Grounds for disqualification include a failure to fulfill the responsibilities of an Elder as designated by the Board of Elders or a failure to live in harmony with the standards, either moral or doctrinal, expressed by this Constitution under the sections entitled Statement of Faith and Qualification for Elders.

If it is determined by the Board of Elders that an Elder has become spiritually or doctrinally disqualified, or if he fails to heed the admonition of the Board of Elders, he shall be removed from office by a unanimous vote of the remaining members of the Board.

g. Meetings - The Chairman of the Board of Elders (and any other Board officers deemed necessary) shall be selected by the unanimous consensus of the Board. Regular meetings shall be held at such time, place and frequency as the Board may determine. Special meetings of the Board of Elders may be called by any officer of the Board. An Elder may be placed on inactive status, for reasons such as disability or extended absence, upon the unanimous consensus of the remaining members of the Board. A minimum three-fourths representation of the active Elders shall be necessary to constitute a quorum at any given meeting.

2. Deacons

a. Duties - The Deacons shall not function as a separate board, but rather each Deacon shall serve under the general oversight of the Elders. The duties of the Deacons shall include the following:

- (1) To aid the Elders in the management of the church.
- (2) To assist in administering the ordinances (see Article IV).
- (3) To supervise the general operations and maintenance of the church buildings and property.
- (4) To perform any other responsibility as delegated and specified by the Board of Elders.

b. Qualifications - There shall be the following criteria for Deacons:

- (1) They must conform to the moral and spiritual qualifications found in I Timothy 3:8:13.
- (2) They must be in agreement with the Statement of Faith** (see Article I).

c. Number - There shall be no prescribed number of Deacons.

d. Selection - The Elders shall seek input from the local fellowship in identifying candidates. After prayerful deliberation by the Board of Elders and upon their unanimous consensus, the prospective candidate(s) shall be presented before the congregation for its consideration. A minimum period of two weeks shall be allotted for this consideration. If in the unanimous opinion of the Board of Elders the candidate has been substantially affirmed by the congregation, he shall be appointed as a Deacon.

e. Term of Appointment - Deacons shall be appointed on a yearly basis.

f. Termination - A Deacon shall be removed from office upon any of the following:

- (1) Death
- (2) Resignation
- (3) Disqualification: Grounds for disqualification include a failure to fulfill the responsibilities of a Deacon as designated by the Board of Elders or a failure to live in harmony with the standards, either moral or doctrinal, expressed by this Constitution under the sections entitled Statement of Faith and Qualifications for Deacons.

If it is determined by the Board of Elders that a Deacon has become spiritually or doctrinally disqualified, or if he fails to heed the admonition of the Board of Elders, he shall be removed from office by a unanimous vote of the Board.

B. Supported Staff

1. Pastoral Staff

a. Qualifications - All members of the pastoral staff shall be in agreement with the Statement of Faith** and in agreement with the philosophy of ministry as held by the Board of Elders. The Senior Pastor (main preaching pastor) and the Executive Pastor shall function as members of the Board of Elders and thus meet the Qualifications for an Elder as specified. Other staff members may also be appointed as Elders, subject to meeting the qualifications as stated and upon completion of the prescribed selection procedure.

b. Selection - In the event of a vacancy in the pastoral staff of the church, the board of Elders shall act as the interviewing agency. After prayerful deliberation by the Board of Elders and upon their unanimous consensus, a prospective candidate for the pastoral staff shall be presented to the congregation for its consideration. A minimum period of two weeks shall be allotted for this consideration. If in the unanimous opinion of the Board of Elders the candidate has been substantially affirmed by the congregation, he shall be appointed to the vacancy for an indefinite period of time.

c. Duties - Pastoral staff responsibilities, job descriptions, salaries, and benefits shall be as specified by the Board of Elders. When salary determinations are made by the Board of Elders, no individual may vote on or be allowed to determine his own salary. The pastoral staff shall function under the direct supervision of the Board of Elders.

d. Number - The size of the pastoral staff shall be as judiciously determined by the Board of Elders.

e. Termination - A member of the Pastoral staff shall be removed from his position upon any of the following:

(1) Death

(2) Resignation: It shall be the prerogative of any member of the pastoral staff to dissolve his relationship with the church upon giving three months notice of such intention. This period may be shortened if mutually agreed upon by the staff member and the Board of Elders.

(3) Disqualification: Grounds for disqualification include a failure to fulfill the responsibilities of the position as designated by the Board of Elders or a failure to live in harmony with the moral and doctrinal standards expressed by this constitution.

If it is determined by the Board of Elders that a staff member has become spiritually or doctrinally disqualified, or if he fails to heed the admonition of the Board of Elders, he shall be dismissed by a unanimous vote of the remaining members of the Board.

2. Other Church Staff

The Board of Elders shall have the authority to employ or terminate secretarial and other staff as is deemed necessary. Such staff shall be responsible to the Board of Elders unless otherwise designated.

C. Committees

The Board of Elders may designate committees for such purpose and duration as deemed appropriate.

ARTICLE III. Membership

A. Procedure

Anyone who has trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior may be a candidate for membership. The process for membership shall involve the following procedure:

1. Membership Class

A multiple session membership class will be offered at regular intervals for those interested in discovering about membership at Wildwood. The sessions shall include information about salvation, our essentials, the statement of faith, WCC's structure, strategy, and philosophy of ministry, plus the membership covenant.

2. Baptism

If a person has not publicly declared his faith by believer's baptism (i.e., water baptism subsequent to and as a testimony of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior) he must undergo believer's baptism as a testimony to the fellowship.

3. Membership Application

Upon satisfactory completion of a Wildwood membership application, he or she shall immediately be recognized as a member of the Wildwood Church family. This application shall include (at minimum) an affirmation of the following four items.

1. Trust in Jesus Christ as Savior
2. Having publicly declared one's faith through believer's baptism
3. Completion of the membership class
4. A willingness to abide by the Wildwood membership covenant

B. Responsibilities

Individuals shall be exhorted:

1. To be submissive to the leadership and authority of the Elders (Hebrews 13:17; I Thess. 5:12-13; I Peter 5:5; I Cor. 1:10).
2. To walk in a manner worthy of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 4:1-3; Col. 1-10-12; I Peter 1:14-16).
3. To be doers of the Word, not merely hearers who delude themselves (James 1:22-25; Matthew 7:24).
4. To exercise their spiritual gifts and minister to others in the fellowship (I Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:6-13, 14:19; I Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:12, 16, 32; Gal. 6:2).

C. Discipline

In order to maintain the purity and peace of the church, the Scripture requires the confrontation and discipline of those in the congregation who practice deliberate and active error, whether doctrinal or moral (Matthew 18:15-20; I Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Titus 1:10-11, 13-14; Romans 16:17; Acts 20:28-31). It should be emphasized that whenever biblical confrontation is practiced, love should be the central motivation and restoration of the erring member the sole purpose. The following procedure shall be followed:

1. It is the duty of the individual who has first-hand knowledge of the sin or doctrinal error to make reasonable attempts to privately admonish the one in error and to encourage him to practice the truth (Matthew 18:15; Luke 17:3; Galatians 6:1).
2. If private reproof fails, one or two additional witnesses shall accompany the original member to confront and admonish the erring party (Matthew 18:16).
3. If reasonable attempts toward confrontation and correction have failed, the charges shall be submitted to the Board of Elders. The accused shall be notified of the charges, and of the date of their consideration by the Elders, and shall be given opportunity to respond. If in the unanimous opinion of the Board of Elders (1) the charges are verified, and (2) the individual does not show evidence of repentance, and (3) the matter is not reconciled to the satisfaction of the Board; the offender shall be publicly dismissed from the membership, attendance, and fellowship of this assembly (Matthew 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; 1 Timothy 5:20; Romans 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6. 14-15).

Dismissal from the church shall always be practiced with a view toward restoration (2 Cor. 2:6-8). When in the unanimous opinion of the Board of Elders the disciplined party shows evidence of repentance, he shall be publicly restored to fellowship by the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE IV. Ordinances

A. Believer's Baptism

Water baptism is understood as the outward testimony of an inward spiritual transformation. It will be administered only to those who give satisfactory testimony of their personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. This church shall practice believer's baptism by immersion, accurately portraying the believer's death, burial and resurrection with Christ.

B. Communion

The Lord's Supper is understood to be a commemoration of His death--the elements being used as emblems of His body and blood--to be observed until His return. It shall be open to all self-examined believers, regardless of church affiliation. It shall be observed on such occasions as the Board of Elders shall deem desirable.

ARTICLE V. Amendments

This constitution can be amended only by the unanimous consensus of the Board of Elders. In addition, provision shall be made for any proposed amendment to be put before the congregation for affirmation. If in the unanimous opinion of the Board of Elders the proposal has been substantially affirmed, the amendment shall be considered ratified.

** The phrase "be in agreement with" means to give a promise and full commitment to consistently honor, teach, and publicly support the Statement of Faith as the historic teaching position of the church.