

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Wise Baptist Church

Adopted: August 27, 2014

PREAMBLE

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

I. NAME

This body shall be known as Wise Baptist Church, located in Wise, Virginia.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

Adhering to the Great Commission, Wise Baptist Church exists to provide a welcoming place for worship, study, and fellowship, grounded in the Scripture and the love of Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, reaching out to others in a unified spirit of Christ-like love, caring, compassion, comfort, and acceptance.

III. CHURCH COVENANT

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 in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel

and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. It is the intent of this Church to cooperate with the Wise Baptist Association, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

IV. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to humanity. It is perfect, and complete, with God as its author and salvation through Jesus Christ as its end.

God

There is only one living and true God. God is infinite in holiness, all powerful and all knowing, and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole person, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

The Church

A New Testament Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ: Lord's Supper and Baptism, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word.

The Great Commission

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every Church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations and seek to win the lost to Christ.

V. ORDINANCES

The ordinances of this Church shall be Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The ordinances shall be administered as an act of worship and shall be administered by the Pastor or whomever the Pastor, Church or Deacons shall authorize. The Lord's Supper is open to all believers.

VI. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. General

This is an autonomous and democratic Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this Church.

Section 2. Qualifications

Individuals shall be eligible for membership in this Church who:

- Have accepted and confessed Jesus Christ as personal Savior and, in gratitude, commit to serve Him as Lord;
- Have been baptized in accordance with the example and command of the New Testament;
- And accept the principles of the Church Covenant.

Upon completion of the appropriate requirements, candidates for membership shall be received into the fellowship of the Church by congregational vote.

Also, any person may request to come under the watch care of this Church who may have membership elsewhere and/or those who would like to be identified with the Church and have a place to worship but not desire membership rights.

Section 3. Voting

Every Church member is entitled to vote in all Church elections and on all questions submitted to the Church in conference, provided the member is present.

Section 4. Cessation of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

a. Death

b. Dismissal to another Baptist Church. A letter of dismissal shall state that the member is in good and regular standing. It shall contain a resume of positions held during tenure in this Church and be addressed to the Church with which the member desires to unite.

c. Dismissal to a non-Baptist Church. A letter of dismissal shall be in the nature of a certificate of good standing.

d. Erasure of name from the Church roll. Any member who desires that his (her) name be erased should make a written request for it. Any member who becomes a member of another Church without request of his (her) letter shall be erased.

VII. CHURCH OFFICERS

The Church Officers are the Trustees and Moderator.

Section 1. Trustees

The Trustees shall consist of not less than three or more than five members elected by the Church for continued service. When a Trustee vacancy occurs the Personnel Committee shall propose a nominee to the Church for election. Those elected by the Church to serve as Trustees must be confirmed by the Wise County Circuit Court as provided for in the statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Confirmation by the Wise County Circuit Court is required before one may assume the duties of a Trustee. A Trustee's vacancy may be filled at any business meeting. The Trustees shall represent the Church in any legal matters as provided by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and hold in trust the Church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the Church authorizing such action. It shall be the function of the Trustees to affix their signature to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of Trustees are required.

To be eligible for service as a Trustee an individual must have been a Church member for a minimum of five years (5).

The term of office of a Trustee shall cease upon: (1) death, (2) resignation, (3) cessation of Church membership, or (4) removal from office by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Church at any business meeting.

Section 2. Moderator

The Moderator shall serve as the lay leader of the Church and shall preside at all business meetings. In the absence of the Moderator, the Chairman of the Deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the Pastor shall call the Church to order and serve as moderator. The Moderator shall also serve on the Leadership Team. Moderators will serve one-year terms and are disqualified from being re-elected for two years following the expiration of the initial one-year term. The Moderator shall be nominated by the Personnel Committee and elected by the Church at its annual meeting. To be eligible to serve as Moderator, an individual must have been a Church member for a minimum of five years.

VIII. ANNUAL POSITIONS

The following Annual Positions shall be nominated by the Personnel Committee and elected by the Church at its annual meeting in August of each year.

Section 1. Clerk

The Church shall annually elect a Church Clerk. The clerk shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the Church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members with dates of admission, dismissal or death, together with a record of baptism. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the Church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary as indicated in these by-laws. The Church clerk shall maintain the official record copy of the constitution and by-laws. The Church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a Church Secretary. All Church records are Church property and should be filed in the Church Office.

Section 2. Financial Secretary

The chairperson of the Finance Committee shall serve as the Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary shall be elected by the Church annually.

Section 3. Assistant Financial Secretary

The Assistant Financial Secretary shall be elected by the Church annually.

Section 4. Teller

The Tellers shall secure and count weekly funds. A minimum of three Tellers shall be elected by the Church annually. Funds should be counted on Church premises by at least two of the three Tellers. In the event that two Tellers are not available, the Treasurer or the Financial Secretary shall assist in the counting. Once the counting is complete, the funds shall be delivered to the Financial Secretary, or in their absence, to the Assistant Financial Secretary.

Section 5. Treasurer

The Church shall elect annually a Treasurer. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon authorization, all money paid or given to the Church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements; render to the Church at the annual business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements.

Section 6. Sunday School Director

The Sunday School Director shall be responsible for organizing Sunday School; helping secure teachers; coordinating the ordering of instructional materials; and providing other duties as needed. The Sunday School Director shall be elected by the Church annually.

Section 7. Sunday School Clerk

The Sunday School Clerk shall maintain Sunday School records. The Sunday School Clerk shall be elected by the Church annually.

Section 8. Children's Church Coordinator

The Children's Church Coordinator shall organize the children's Church service. The Children's Church Coordinator shall be elected by the Church annually.

Section 9. Moderator

See VII section 2 for description.

IX. DEACONS

Deacons shall be elected by the Church, and ordained if not previously ordained.

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the Church. The tasks of the Deacons are to assist the Pastor and staff by providing lay leadership; to assist with visitation and care for the Church and their families in times of need; to assist as needed with Church ordinances; and to otherwise assist the Pastor and staff in engaging the Church in a fellowship of worship and witness in accordance with the mission of the Church.

The Deacons shall consist of nine members, three of which will be elected annually for three-year terms. Three Deacons will rotate off annually and not be eligible for re-election for a period of one year. To be eligible for Deacon Ministry an individual must have been a Church member for a minimum of two (2) years.

The Church may, upon recommendation and nomination by the Deacon group, elect individuals to serve as Honorary Life Deacons. To be eligible for this honor, one must be a longstanding Church member, be at least 70 years of age and have been previously ordained and served as an active Deacon.

X. THE PASTORATE

Section 1. Role of the Pastor

The Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament Church. The Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the Church and as such he shall work with the Deacons and Church staff to:

- a. Lead the Church in performing its tasks
- b. Lead the Church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry and application
- c. Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and
- d. Care for the Church's members and other persons in the community

The Pastor shall chair the Leadership Team and be an ex-officio member of all Church committees.

Section 2. Calling of a Pastor

Whenever there is a vacancy in The Pastorate, a Pastor Search Committee, nominated by the Deacons, and elected and commissioned by the Church, composed of no more than nine (9) and no less than seven (7) members, shall be charged with recruiting and screening candidates to fill the vacancy. The Pastor Search Committee, after completing the screening process, shall present its recommendation to the Church. Such recommendation by the committee shall constitute a nomination. Neither the Committee nor the Church shall ever consider more than one candidate at any one time. The Church membership shall vote on the recommendation (nomination) of the Committee at a special called business meeting for that purpose. Election shall be by secret ballot. An affirmative vote of eighty-five percent (85%) of those members present and voting shall be necessary for a Pastor to be called.

Section 3. Covenant

The Church and new Pastor shall enter into a Covenant which shall define the contractual and spiritual relationship between the parties and terms and conditions governing the same.

Section 4. Termination of a Pastor

The Covenant may contain language and terms describing how termination may be accomplished by either party. Should the Church choose to terminate the relationship, it will require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the membership present and voting at a special meeting for that purpose and such special called meeting shall require an advance thirty (30) day notice.

XI. MINISTERIAL AND CHURCH STAFF

Section 1. Ministerial Staff

The ministerial staff shall consist of the Pastor and others as may be needed from time to time.

Section 2. Church Staff

The Church shall employ other staff members such as secretarial staff as may be needed from time to time. The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for screening and making recommendations concerning candidates for these positions.

XII. CHURCH COMMITTEES/LEADERSHIP TEAM

Section 1. Church Committees

The ministry of the church shall be organized into committees and the Leadership Team, including, but not limited to: Building and Facilities Management Committee, Children's Committee, Education Committee, Finance Committee, Mission Committee, Worship Committee, Personnel Committee and Youth Committee. The Leadership Team coordinates the overall ministry of the Church. The following provisions shall apply to all Church Committee members:

- Chairperson shall be a Church member.
- All Finance, Personnel and Trustee members shall be Church members.
- Committees may have "Sub-Committees" as required.

- Committees will submit requests for funds to the Leadership Team.
- The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all Church Committees, but is not required to attend meetings and does not have voting rights. Other ministerial staff may be ex-officio members of Church Committees as determined by the membership.

Building and Facilities Management Committee:

The Building and Facilities Management Committee is responsible for the care and maintenance of all Church property, including the building, grounds, vehicles, equipment and furnishings. This Committee formulates policy governing the use of Church property, sets priorities and schedules for major repairs and upkeep. This Committee is responsible for implementing and organizing Church security. This Committee shall have a least six (6) members.

Children's Committee:

The purpose of the Children's Committee is to ensure that the needs of our youngest Church members are met. This Committee shall be responsible for leading all programs that pertain to young children—ages birth thru 6th grade. This Committee shall be responsible for organization of the Wednesday night children's program, and shall work with the Personnel Committee in obtaining a Children's Program Coordinator. The team will recognize and promote the following three (3) points at a minimum:

- God has a concern for children (learning and discipleship)
- Children can have a relationship with God (evangelism)
- Children can have a responsibility to others (missions)

This group will include, but not be limited to, representatives from VBS, Choirs, Sunday School, Nursery, and any other children's program in an attempt to ensure continuity of ministry to our children. The group will be responsible for the health and safety issues as they relate to young children, programming, activities, missions, and outreach. This Committee shall have at least six (6) members.

Education Committee:

This Committee shall oversee all aspects of the Church's Sunday School program. The Education Committee, with the participation and cooperation of the Church

staff, will direct and oversee the program of activities and education directed to adult members of the Church, such as Sunday School, Wednesday evening programs, adult retreats or conferences, senior adult, college, singles ministry, or any other program deemed necessary. It will consult with members and teachers of all Sunday School classes in selection of curriculum materials. It will evaluate the need and resources available for establishment of new Sunday School classes and other adult programs. This Committee shall have at least six (6) members, including the Sunday School Director.

Finance Committee:

The Finance Committee is responsible for analyzing the Church's financial needs and possibilities, preparing and recommending an annual budget, administering expenditures from the annual budget and designated funds of the Church, with special attention to cash flow, timing, unanticipated needs and accountability. The Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary manage the deposits and individual donor records, which are confidential records and not accessible by any other committee member or staff including the Pastor. The Treasurer manages payables and tracks all funds. This Committee shall have at least six (6) members, including Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary and Treasurer. The Personnel Committee shall nominate other members to serve annually.

Missions Committee:

The Missions Committee shall be responsible for the coordination of mission activities. The Committee shall initiate mission activity where needed and seek the aid and cooperation of other groups in supporting these endeavors. The Committee shall serve as a clearing house for mission activity with the Church so as to prevent duplication and neglect. This Committee shall have at least six (6) members.

Worship Committee:

The Worship Committee shall be responsible for working with the Pastor and other staff members in planning portions of the worship service as requested by the Church Ministerial staff. This Committee is responsible for coordinating ushers. This committee will have at least six (6) members.

Personnel Committee:

The Personnel Committee, with the participation and cooperation of the Pastor, shall periodically survey and determine the Church's personnel needs, shall define the duties of Church staff members, and shall assist in the review of the performance of staff members. The Committee recommends to the Church employment/discharge of personnel and recommends staff salary and benefits to the Finance Committee. The Personnel Committee meets as required to handle concerns and grievances with and by staff members. The Personnel Committee also serves as the nominating committee and leads the Church in filling all Church-elected leadership positions with volunteers from the Church membership. The Committee nominates all Annual Positions and Committee members at the annual business meeting in August. This Committee shall have at least six (6) members.

Youth Committee:

The Youth Committee shall develop and promote junior and senior youth programs at Wise Baptist Church. Youth will be divided into Jr High Youth (grades 7th and 8th) and Senior Youth (grades 9th thru 12th). The Youth Committee shall address the spiritual, emotional and social needs of our young people. This Committee shall have at least six (6) members.

Section 2. Leadership Team

The primary functions of the Leadership Team shall be to recommend to the Church suggested objectives and Church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by Church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the Church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; to evaluate program achievements in terms of Church goals and objectives; and to nominate individuals for the Personnel Committee.

Ministry: The Leadership Team shall act as a conduit to communicate the requests of all Committees to the Church and Church to Committees. The Leadership Team shall compile and deliver to the Finance Committee for its evaluation, requests by the Church for funds to achieve the Church's ministries. The Leadership Team

Committee, for its evaluation, requests by the Church for funds to achieve the Church's ministries. The Leadership Team shall consist of a Chairperson from each Committee, a Deacon Representative, two (2) at-large members, Church Moderator and the Church Ministerial staff as ex-officio members. The Pastor shall chair the Leadership Committee.

XIII. CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1. Church Budget

The Finance Committee shall prepare and present a proposed Church Budget for adoption by the membership at the annual meeting of the Church in August of each year.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

The Treasurer shall maintain at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements and render an annual report to the Church at its August business meeting. Internal audits will be performed annually and external audits will be performed every five (5) years.

Section 3. Special Offerings

Offerings may be made for specific causes or objects not included in the budget with prior approval of the Finance Committee or Deacons.

Section 4. Special Fundraising

Any special fundraising activities by the Church and/or Church groups should have prior approval of the Finance Committee.

XIV. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and Wednesday evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism and for the worship of the Almighty God. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the Church and for all people

and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastorate. Wednesday evening services may be suspended temporarily in the summer in accordance with the will of the Church. At the discretion of the Leadership Team or congregation, other regular or special services may be held.

Section 2. Special Services

Special Services and Church organization meetings shall be placed on the calendar. No meeting of any Church group shall be held during Wednesday evening worship service unless prior approval is granted by the Leadership Team.

Section 3. Regular Business Meetings

An annual Church business meeting will be held in August of each year. Special meetings may be called as needed.

Section 4. Special Business Meetings

The Pastor, Deacons, Leadership Team, Trustees, or any thirty-five (35) members may call a specially called business meeting to consider special matters of a significant nature. The subject, date, time and location of any special called business meeting must be announced at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

Section 5. Quorum

Thirty-five (35) members of the Church shall constitute a quorum. A quorum is required in order to conduct Church business.

XV. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

A. Nominations

1. Annual Positions and Trustees

The Personnel Committee shall nominate all individuals to serve in the Church Annual Positions, on Church committees, and for vacancies in the office of Church Trustee.

2. Pastor Selection Committee

In the event of a vacancy in the Pastorate, each Church member can recommend four (4) members to serve on a Pastor Selection Committee. The Deacons, after consideration of the recommendation, shall nominate individuals representing a cross section of the membership to serve on the Pastor Selection Committee.

3. Deacons

Each Church member can recommend annually three (3) Church members to serve as Deacons. Active Deacons will evaluate nominations presented by the Church, and will present candidates for the Deacon fellowship for election at the Church's annual meeting.

B. Elections

1. Annual

An election shall be held at the Church's annual meeting in August of each year to select individuals to fill the Annual Positions, to serve on Church committees, to elect Deacons and other positions which may be needed from time to time. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by members present and voting shall be required for election.

2. Special

Special elections may be held from time to time as needed and/or required by the Church. The subject, date, time and location of any special election must be announced at least two (2) weeks in advance of the election. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by members present and voting shall be required except in the case of a vote to call a Pastor. For a Pastor to be called by the Church, eighty-five (85%) per cent of those members present and voting is required.

3. Ballots and Voting

Elections may be held in most instances by voice vote, without ballots. In an election to call a Pastor, secret ballots shall be used. In any election where ballots are used, the Chairman of the Deacons and/or his designees shall be responsible for counting the ballots.

XVI. CHURCH POLICIES

The Church business year shall begin on September 1st of each year and end on the last day of August in the following year.

XVII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Church in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of orders the Church may adopt.

XVIII. AMENDMENTS OF CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended at any regular or specially called business meeting of the Church by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing no less than thirty (30) days preceding the business meeting at which the vote will be taken.