

The Constitution of Waxhaw Bible Church

PREAMBLE

We adopt, declare, and establish this Constitution for the purpose of preserving and securing the principles of our faith, so that this body of believers may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the teachings of the Holy Scripture, for the glory of God.

ARTICLE 1: LEGAL NAME

The name of this church shall be WAXHAW BIBLE CHURCH (WBC).

ARTICLE 2: PURPOSE

Section 1. Vision

By the power of the Holy Spirit, through new life in Christ and communion with the Father, Waxhaw Bible Church exists to glorify God.

Section 2. Core Values

- a. **Bible Based:** The Bible is the only inspired, infallible, and inerrant source of revelation from God, and is the foundation for how we interpret the world around us and the basis for all of our life decisions.
- b. **Prayer Powered:** Prayer demonstrates our complete dependence on God. Not a formula or form, it is constant communication with Him. Through prayer we seek His direction and strength to accomplish His will.
- c. **Family Focused:** The family unit was ordained by God as the building block for all human society. We believe the primary environment for biblical instruction is the home, so we support the family by encouraging, protecting, and instructing its member(s) in how to fulfill their roles.
- d. **Body Building:** This church body is a community of faith, a place to belong, to be loved and to show love to others. Therefore we will edify, support, and hold one another accountable to follow Christ's example.
- e. **Mission Minded:** The mission God has given His church is to make disciples; therefore we will proclaim His message of salvation and show the love of Christ in our church, our community, and the world.

ARTICLE 3: STATEMENT OF FAITH

While explicit agreement of these statements is not required for membership, it should be understood that WBC will teach and defend these doctrines as presented. Dialog regarding doctrine is encouraged; division and disruption are not.

Section 1. The Bible

We believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired of God and are inerrant in the original writings, and are the supreme and final authority in faith and life. Isaiah 55:11; Jeremiah 1:12; Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21

Section 2. God

We believe in one God eternally existing in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (co-eternal in being); each having precisely the same attributes (co-identical in nature); worthy of the same worship and obedience (co-equal in power and glory). Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19,20; John 1:1-14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2

Section 3. Father

We believe that the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, is the Designer, Creator, Sustainer, and Sovereign Ruler of the universe. All created things exist by His will and for His pleasure and glory. Because of His infinite love, the Father willed that fallen mankind could be redeemed from sin and reconciled to Himself through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, to worship Him and enjoy fellowship with Him for now and eternity. John 3:16; 4:23; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 11:3; 15:24-28; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Galatians 1:3-5; 3:26; 4:6; Ephesians 1:3-11; 4:4-6; Hebrews 2:10-11; 12:5-9; James 1:13; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 4:9-11

Section 4. Jesus

- a. We believe that Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, is true God and true Man. He is the only begotten Son of the Father, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. We believe that Jesus Christ is sinless and died for our sins as a vicarious/substitutionary blood sacrifice; His crucified body was raised from the dead, and He ascended into Heaven to stand before the Father as our High Priest, Advocate and Mediator. His sinless life and His death on the cross provide the only atonement that fully satisfies the righteous requirements of God for the sinner. Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 Peter 1:18-20; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and 1 John 2:1-2

- b. We believe in “that blessed hope” which is the personal and imminent coming in the air of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His return to earth with His saints, to establish His Millennial Kingdom. Zechariah 14:1-21; Luke 16:19-26; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-15; 21:1-8

Section 5. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, being the Third Person of the Trinity, convicts men of sin, enables men to place genuine faith in Jesus Christ, regenerates, indwells, baptizes, seals, and sets believers apart to a holy life. We believe His indwelling at the moment of saving faith constitutes the only baptism of the Holy Spirit and is not necessarily evidenced by any special immediate signs. We believe the Holy Spirit gives gifts to every believer as He determines, for mutual service within the Church/body of Christ. We also believe that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth, and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled/controlled with the Spirit of God. John 14:16, 17; 16:7-15; Romans 8:9-17; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 12:1-31; 13:8; Ephesians 1:13; 2:22; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27

Section 6. Man

We believe that man was directly created in the image of God, but that in Adam’s sin, the race fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, and that all human beings, the man Christ Jesus alone excepted, are born with a sinful nature and are totally depraved, and that each man of himself is utterly unable to remedy his lost condition and must be born again of the Spirit of God. Genesis 1:26, 27; 1 Samuel 15:23; John 3:3-7; Romans 3:22, 23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12

Section 7. Sin

We believe sin is any lack of conformity to the will of God, or transgression of the law of God. Sin separates man from God, incurring His wrath and judgment, and resulting in man’s spiritual and physical death. Sin is manifested in selfishness, rebellion and the total depravity of man’s conduct and behavior before God and man. Sin is the cause of the curse and defilement of the created universe. Genesis 3:17, 18; Romans 6:23; 8:21; James 2:10; 1 John 3:4; 5:17

Section 8. Salvation

We believe that salvation from spiritual death is a free gift offered by God through His grace. It is received by personal repentance from sin, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ’s precious blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins (without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins), and no righteous work on our part can in the least add to the value of that precious blood or to the merit of the redemptive work completed on Calvary. We further believe that all who are truly born again/saved are sealed by the Holy Spirit and no one can snatch us from the hand of the Father. In the end Christ will present us blameless before the Father. Isaiah 64:6; John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24,25; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; 20:31; Romans 3:24-26; 8:1, 16, 28-39; 10:9,10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 2:8, 9; 4:30; Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:18-23; 1 John 5:10-13; Jude 24

Section 9. Eternal State

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all mankind: the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 11:25, 26; Revelation 20:5, 6, 12, 13

1. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, consciously awaiting the first resurrection when spirit, soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; Revelation 20:4-6
2. We believe that the souls of unbelievers after death are in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with spirit, soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment. Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15

Section 10. The Church

- a. We believe the universal church, which consists of all true believers in the Lord Jesus, is both the body of Christ and the promised bride of Christ. Christ is the head of the Church, and nothing will be able to stand against it. 1 Corinthians 12:27; 2 Corinthians 11:2
- b. We believe the local church is a body of believers in Christ, bonded together as one through the Holy Spirit, who are to minister to one another within the Church using the gifts given by the Holy Spirit. Romans 12:4-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 12-14
- c. We believe that as members of one another we are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, loving one another fervently with a true heart. Mark 16:15; 1 Corinthians 12:12-18; Ephesians 2:18-22; 4:1-6,25; Colossians 3:14,15; 1 Peter 1:22

- d. We believe that the New Testament models the establishment of autonomous (self-governing) local churches. Each local church is responsible for selecting certain men of biblical qualifications to serve in leadership, i.e. elders and deacons. Acts 6:1-16; 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11

Section 11. Ordinances

We believe that the Lord has committed two ordinances to the local church, namely Baptism and The Lord's Supper:

1. Believer's Baptism is a public testimony of the individual's personal faith in the crucified, buried and risen Lord. It does not in any way grant the forgiveness of sins or confer grace to the participant. Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (When it is physically impossible for the believer to be immersed, another mode will be considered.) Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:9,10; Acts 8:36-39; 18:8; Romans 6:3-5
2. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ to commemorate His death for us. Believers are to practice this ordinance until Christ comes again. The elements used are symbolic of our Lord's body and blood and do not grant life or convey grace to the participant. Luke 22:19,20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34

Section 12. Satan

We believe Satan is a created angelic being who rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven. He is the god of this age/world, ruling by the permissive will of God. He exercises authority over the unsaved, tempts the believer to sin, and continually accuses the believer before the throne of God. He has been defeated by the finished work of Christ on Calvary. During the millennium, he will be confined to the abyss to be released at the end of the period to lead the armies of evil against God. He will be finally defeated and judged and doomed to the lake of fire. Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:2; Zechariah 3:1; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; Colossians 1:16; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; 1 John 3:8; Jude 6; Revelation 12:10b; 20:2, 3, 10

Section 13. Human Sexuality

- a. We believe that both male and female together bear the image of God and are equal in value and position before God, but that God has ordained different roles and functions for men and women. Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12
- b. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. Genesis 2:24; Genesis 19:5, 13; Genesis 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7; Ephesians 5:22-23

Section 14. Sanctity of Life

- a. We believe that since man is created in the image of God, all human life is sacred. We believe human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of human life. Abortion is murder. Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44
- b. We believe human life should continue until God sovereignly chooses to give man his last breath. Euthanasia is unbiblical and contrary to the will of God. Euthanasia is murder. Genesis 9:5-6; Job 14:5, Acts 17:25-26, Psalm 139:16, Psalm 31:15, Isaiah 38:5, Daniel 5:23

Section 15. Institution of the Family

- a. **Marriage:** We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one genetic male and one genetic female in a monogamous, life-long covenant relationship. Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7, Ephesians 5:22-23
- b. **Divorce:** We believe God's intention is for marriage to last until one (or both) of the spouses dies. Although God hates divorce, in His grace He has allowed for (yet not required) divorce under certain circumstances:
 1. If a spouse is guilty of sexual immorality (i.e. - sexual contact with someone other than his or her spouse), repentance and reconciliation should be sought. However, if the offender is unrepentant, as a last resort divorce is allowed. Matt. 5:32, Matt. 19:7-9
 2. When an unbelieving spouse desires to leave and all attempts to keep him or her in the marriage fall short, divorce is permitted. 1 Corinthians 7:12-15
- c. **Remarriage:** We believe remarriage is biblically acceptable when a spouse has died or if a person was divorced for biblically-acceptable reasons. Rom. 7:2-3, 1 Corinthians 7:12-16
- d. **Divorce and Leadership in the Church:** We believe divorce does not necessarily preclude a man from serving as an elder or deacon; however, extra caution is taken to determine faithfulness and strength of character. While listing the qualifications for leaders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, the Apostle Paul stressed the importance of the overall character of a godly man rather than a single life experience. First Timothy 3:2 says

a leader is to be a “one-woman man.” We believe this should be understood to mean a man who demonstrates dedication, faithfulness, and devotion to his wife, as evidenced by his life.

- e. **Family Structure:** We believe that God has ordained the family as a foundational institution of human society. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. A wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ (Ephesians 5). Children are a heritage from the Lord, and parents are responsible for training their children spiritually and morally through appropriate discipline and consistent modeling. Genesis 1:26-28, Exodus 20:12, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 127:3-5, Proverbs 19:18, 22:15, 23:13-14, Malachi 2:16; Mark 10:6-12, 1 Corinthians 7:1-16, Ephesians 5:21-33, 6:1-4, Colossians 3:18-21, Hebrews 13:4, and 1 Peter 3:1-7

ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications

- a. The membership of WBC will consist of such persons who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and who manifest the reality of their personal relationship with Him in their choices and lifestyle.
- b. The following beliefs represent doctrines essential to salvation. While church members are not required to fully understand or articulate all aspects of these beliefs, the explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership in Waxhaw Bible Church.
 - 1. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is therefore infallible and inerrant in the original writings, and is the complete and final authority for our faith and life.
 - 2. There is one God, Creator of heaven and earth, who exists eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - 3. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is wholly God and wholly man.
 - 4. Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God, and that he fell through sin; and that as a consequence of his sin, he became dead in trespasses and sins, and that he became subject to the power of the devil. We also believe that this spiritual death has been transmitted to the entire human race, the Man Christ Jesus alone being excepted; therefore every human being needs spiritual regeneration.
 - 5. Jesus Christ died for our sins as our substitutionary sacrifice, that He rose bodily from the dead, and all who receive Him by faith are justified and eternally saved.
- c. Members must agree to abide by the Constitution of WBC.
- d. Members must be willing to submit to the constituted government of WBC. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17
- e. No person may be excluded from membership in this church for reasons of age, infirmity, gender, race or nationality.

Section 2. Membership Process

- a. Those interested in membership at WBC shall make their intentions known to an elder, a deacon, or the church office, and shall receive an application for membership along with a copy of the church Constitution.
- b. Upon receipt of the completed application, the elders, and/or their designated representatives, shall schedule a personal interview with the applicant(s). Applicants who give satisfactory testimony of their faith in Jesus Christ and commitment to WBC and who otherwise meet the qualifications of Article 4, Section 1 of this Constitution, shall, upon consensus of the interviewing team, be recognized as members.
- c. Affiliate membership may be granted providing the individual’s home church has no stipulation in its Constitution prohibiting it. Affiliate membership shall carry all the responsibilities and privileges of regular membership.

Section 3. Member Status

- a. **Active:** A member will be considered ‘Active’ for as long as the member participates in the life of the church as evidenced by continued attendance of worship services.
- b. **Inactive:** A member will be considered ‘Inactive’ upon request or by failure to participate in the life of the church as evidenced by not attending worship services for a period of six-months, unless hindered by extenuating circumstances (see d. Exceptions, below).
- c. **Removed:** A member will be removed from membership:
 - 1. Following his or her death.
 - 2. After he or she has voluntarily resigned.
 - 3. After non-attendance of worship services for a period of 1 year (see d. Exceptions, below).
 - 4. When he or she no longer meets the qualifications for membership.
 - 5. As an act of church discipline.

- d. **Exceptions** are made for those who are away in school; involved in military or missionary service; ill; hospitalized; shut-in; or those that have an unusual work schedule. Before membership is removed, the elders, or deacons at the elders' request, will make every reasonable effort to contact the individual in question to determine if there are extenuating circumstances that are preventing his or her involvement in the life of the church.

Section 4. Rights and Responsibilities

Each member shall be privileged and expected to attend worship services, take part in a Sunday School class and/or community group, and contribute of his or her time, talents, and finances to the mission and life of the church, in a way that is consistent with Scripture, God's Spirit, and with the gifts, strength, time, and material resources each has received from God.

Section 5. Privileges

a. Voting

1. All active members who are at least eighteen years old may vote on the following items of church business:
 - i. The annual budget.
 - ii. Any obligation incurred to spend over \$2,500.00 on one item (unless said item was included in the last approved annual budget).
 - iii. Decisions regarding the real property of the church.
 - iv. Constitutional amendments.
 - v. The call for sabbatical or resignation of an elder or deacon.
2. Provided a quorum of at least one-half (1/2) of the active membership, a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of members present shall be required for passage.

b. Affirmation

1. It is required and appropriate for those in church leadership to make decisions within their authority that affect the church as a whole. In the spirit of unity and transparency, the affirmation process provides an avenue of communication and agreement between the leadership and the congregation at large.
2. The intent of the affirmation process is two-fold:
 - i. To inform the congregation of any impending decision and the rationale behind it, so that if there are any serious or unforeseen concerns from the congregation they may be considered before making a final decision.
 - ii. To give the congregation an opportunity to express its agreement or concerns with a decision.
3. At any duly called church family meeting or church business meeting, a vote of affirmation may be called for by any active member in attendance regarding elder or deacon decisions, including, but not limited to:
 - i. The appointment of an elder or deacon to office.
 - ii. Matters of church discipline and restoration.
 - iii. Licensure and Ordination.
4. A decision will be considered affirmed if two-thirds (2/3) of the active members present vote in agreement with the decision. If the active members do not affirm a decision, the elders or deacons will take time to pray, review members' concerns, and reconsider the decision, seeking the Lord for either confirmation of their original decision or new direction, before announcing a final decision to the congregation.

Section 6. Church Discipline

a. Purpose

1. As the holy and beloved Bride of Christ, the church and its members should demonstrate a continuous progression toward Christ-like perfection and maturity. Members and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship at WBC who evidence a consistent disregard for Christ-like conduct shall be subject to discipline.
2. All discipline should intentionally be for the purpose of reconciliation and restoration to fellowship with the church body.

b. Process

1. As directed by our Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15, it is the responsibility of every church member who has knowledge of an erring person's unbiblical beliefs or misconduct to warn and to correct the erring person in private, seeking his or her repentance, restoration, and when necessary, restitution.

This must be done with love and caution (Galatians 6:1). If the erring person does not heed this warning and correction; then,

2. As directed by our Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:16, the warning member should return to the erring person accompanied by one or two witnesses. The purpose of the witnesses is to strengthen the effect of the discipline by confirming the facts of the matter (Deuteronomy 19:15, Matt. 18:19-20). The witnesses should be spiritually mature believers. Once again, the purpose is to warn and correct the erring person in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring person still refuses to repent; then,
3. The matter must be communicated to the elders. The elders will appropriately investigate any allegation brought to them, including interviewing the accused, and if in their determination the accused is in the wrong, they will call the erring person to repentance and seek his or her restoration. If the erring person refuses to repent, the elders may, with consensus: admonish the erring member; suspend the erring member from receiving communion for a definite period; temporarily remove the erring member from any leadership or ministry position; temporarily revoke voting rights; and/or terminate membership. Matthew 18:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19–20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5
4. The elders will (with discretion) present the issue and their decision to the congregation at a duly called church family meeting and call for affirmation. The congregation will be encouraged to pray for the repentance and restoration of the erring person.
5. Should the erring person demonstrate genuine repentance, the elders will investigate and, upon consensus of the elder body, present the repentant person to the congregation, recommend restoration to fellowship, and call for affirmation. Scripture tells us that genuine repentance will make itself evident by its deeds and attitudes. The repentant person will:
 - i. Freely acknowledge his/her sin. 1 John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13a
 - ii. Cease the activity for which he/she is being disciplined or at least seek help if it is a life-dominating pattern. Proverbs 28:13b; Galatians 6:1f; James 5:19-20
 - iii. Make restitution and/or ask for forgiveness from those hurt, as applicable. Philippians 18-19; Matthew 5:23-24
 - iv. Demonstrate a genuine change of heart, a real concern and godly sorrow over his actions, not in order to be forgiven, but because of the harm caused to the glory of God and the hurt caused to others. 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; Psalms 51:17

ARTICLE 5: PUBLIC WORSHIP

Meetings for public worship shall be held at such times and places as may be provided for under the direction of the elders.

ARTICLE 6: GOVERNMENT

Section 1. Elders

a. Definition

Overseer: Under the ultimate authority of Jesus Christ, the overall policy, direction and management of the ministry and operations of Waxhaw Bible Church shall be vested in the elder body. Acts 14:23; 15:1-2; 20:17, 28-31; 21:18-23; Colossians 1:15-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Hebrews 12:17; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:14; 5:17; 19; 20-25; Titus 1:5; 7; 8-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5

b. Qualifications

1. The minimum qualifications for elders shall not be less than those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
2. In addition, elders must be active male members who fully agree with and endorse the Statement of Faith (Article 3).

- #### **c. Selection**
- “The overriding concern of the New Testament in relation to church leadership is to ensure that the right kind of men will serve as elders and deacons. The offices of God’s church are not honorary positions bestowed on individuals who have attended church faithfully or who are senior in years. Nor are these offices to be viewed as church-board positions to be filled with good friends, rich donors, or charismatic personalities. Nor are they positions that only graduate seminary students can fill. The church offices—both eldership and deaconship—are open to all men who meet the apostolic, biblical requirements. The New Testament unequivocally emphasizes this.” Alexander Strauch, *The Biblical Eldership Booklet* (Colorado Springs: Lewis & Roth Publishers, 1997).

1. It is the Holy Spirit who calls and equips certain men for eldership. Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11

2. In response to the Holy Spirit's prompting, those who desire the office of elder should make their desire known to the elder body. The elder body shall also constantly seek to identify and develop potential future elders.
3. It is the responsibility of the existing elder body to examine those who desire the office and appoint those who are deemed qualified. In the unlikely event that there are no elders, the deacons shall examine prospective elders and present them to the congregation for affirmation. Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5
4. After his doctrine and character have been examined and proven to meet the qualifications stated herein, and with consensus of the elder body, a man shall be presented to the church as a prospective elder at least 4 weeks prior to appointment. The members of the church are encouraged to voice both commendations and concerns to the elder body. Prior to his appointment, the members will be called upon to affirm the selection.
5. Once a prospective elder is appointed, the elders will designate a special service, or a portion of a regular church service, to ordain him and celebrate God's calling on his life to the office of elder at WBC.
6. The elder board shall be composed of at least 5 but no more than 21 men. The number serving at any given time will be set by the elders according to the needs of the church and the availability of men qualified to serve. There shall be a majority of non-vocational elders.

d. Duties

1. The elders are entrusted with the governance of Waxhaw Bible Church by prayer and according to the Bible and the church Constitution.
2. Their oversight includes, but is not limited to: teaching, equipping, leading, protecting, and praying and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members, as well as oversight of all ministry, operations and finances of the church. Acts 14:23; Acts 15:1-2; Acts 20:17, 28-31; 1 Peter 5:2; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:14; 5:17, 19; 20-25; Titus 1:5, 8-9
3. The elders are responsible for holding the church faithful to biblical doctrine in all of its teaching and ministry. Titus 1:9
4. The elders are responsible for establishing the overall direction of the church.
5. The elders are ex-officio members of all committees of the church.

e. Terms of Service

1. Length of Service
 - i. As there is no length of service specified in the Bible, it is understood that elders shall serve as long as they are capable, worthy, and willing.
 - ii. If the elder body determines that an elder needs an extended sabbatical because of a legitimate need (e.g., illness, tragedy), that elder can transition to being an inactive and non-voting elder for a set period of time determined by the elder body. The status of the elder will be communicated to the church.
 - iii. To resign from the elder body, an elder must notify the elder body in writing. The elders will determine the most fruitful and edifying way to notify the church.
 - iv. A vacancy on the elder body because of death, resignation, removal or any other cause shall be filled at the elder body's discretion and only in the manners prescribed in this Constitution.
2. Removal from Office
 - i. Any elder may be removed from office if he is deemed no longer capable, worthy, or willing. Discipline of elders must be consistent with the standards set forth in 1 Timothy 5:19-21 and Article 4, Section 6 Church Discipline.
 - ii. If one-fourth (1/4) of the active members feel that the elder body is either not fulfilling its responsibilities or abusing its authority as stated in this Constitution, a church family meeting shall be called to address their concerns, in accordance with Article 7, Section 1(b). The concerned members will present their case to the active members. Provided a quorum of at least one-half (1/2) of the active membership, upon review of the concerns, a two-thirds (2/3) majority of members present may call for sabbatical for, or resignation of, any or all of the elders.

f. Licensing / Ordination

1. The church may license any active member who demonstrates the call of God to the ministry of the church. This license will document the person's calling and the affirmation of the church, and will

afford him all the privileges granted by civil authorities. The elder body will examine him for calling, biblical qualifications, giftedness, and character, and request affirmation from the congregation.

2. Ordination involves the public commissioning of a man to the ministry of the gospel, and his public commitment to that ministry. Ordination is a function of the local church, not Bible colleges, seminaries, or denominations. Acts 13:1-3, 14:23

g. Elder Meetings

1. Officers

- i. 'Chairman' – Enjoying no special status or privilege, the Chairman facilitates the elder meetings by reminding members of the meeting place and time, setting the agenda for each meeting, and moving the meeting along in a timely fashion. The Chairman is appointed by consensus of the elder body, and may be changed at any time.
- ii. 'Secretary' – The Secretary records the minutes of the elder meetings (manually and/or otherwise) and distributes the minutes to the other members of the elder body. The Secretary is appointed by consensus of the elder body, and may be changed at any time.

2. Decision-Making

On all matters the elders consider, the goal shall be to seek the mind of God through prayer and in accordance with the Bible. A consensus (i.e. – general agreement or assent to a decision; permission even with disagreement) of all the elders must be sought. If a consensus cannot be gained, they may table the matter and engage in further prayer and discussion at another time until consensus is reached.

Section 2. Deacons

a. Definition

Servant: The overall responsibility of the deacon body is to serve the church by assisting the elders in their service functions. cf. Acts 6:1-6

b. Qualifications

1. The minimum qualifications for deacons shall not be less than those listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
2. In addition, deacons must be active male members who fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith.

c. Selection

The process of selecting deacons is the same as that for elders, as described above.

d. Duties

1. The deacons shall be responsible to prudently manage the physical and monetary resources of the church, including managing the overall church finances within the overall budget.
 - i. The Treasurer shall make disbursements of such funds for obligations of the church as authorized or directed by the deacons. The Treasurer may establish appropriate accounts in selected banks and/or savings institutions for the deposit of the church's financial assets, including money accounts and short term Certificates of Deposit, but he may not otherwise make investments of the church's assets without authorization of the deacons.
 - ii. The Treasurer shall present a written report of the church's expenditures and disbursements to each annual church business meeting and shall give a summary report of such expenditures and disbursements, upon request, at any business meeting of the church.
2. The deacons shall not encumber with loans, transfer, sell or purchase any real estate for the church except by express authorization conveyed through a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the active members present, provided a quorum of at least one-half (1/2) of the active members is present, at a duly called church business meeting.
3. The annual budget shall be prepared by the deacons and presented to the congregation two weeks prior to the annual church business meeting. The fiscal year of the church shall end at the close of the 31st day of December in each year.
4. Deacons shall have authority to make emergency repairs on all church property as needed. Should the required repairs exceed the emergency repair budget, the deacons shall propose a solution to the congregation for a vote of affirmation.
5. Deacons shall appoint the Officers of the Corporation (see Article 11).

e. Terms of Service

1. Length of Service

- i. Deacons are expected to serve in this capacity for as long they are capable, worthy, and willing.
 - ii. If a deacon needs an extended sabbatical because of a legitimate need (e.g., illness, tragedy), then he can transition to being inactive for a set period of time as determined by that deacon and the elder body. The status of the deacon will be communicated to the church.
 - iii. A deacon may resign at any time by giving written notice to both the deacon and elder bodies.
 2. Removal From Office

Any deacon may be removed from the office for valid cause. Discipline of deacons must be consistent with the standards set forth in Article 4, Section 6: Church Discipline.
- f. **Meetings**
 1. Officers
 - i. 'Chairman' – Enjoying no special status or privilege, the Chairman facilitates the deacon meetings by reminding members of the meeting place and time, setting the agenda for each meeting, and moving the meeting along in a timely fashion. The Chairman is appointed by consensus of the deacon body, and may be changed at any time.
 - ii. 'Secretary' – The Secretary records the minutes of the deacon meetings (manually and/or otherwise) and distributes the minutes to the other members of the deacon body. The Secretary is appointed by consensus of the deacon body, and may be changed at any time.
 2. Decision-Making
 - i. During regularly scheduled deacon meetings, one-half of the deacon membership is required to establish a quorum.
 - ii. On all matters the deacons consider, the goal shall be to seek the mind of God through prayer and in accordance with the Bible.
 - iii. For major decisions, including church staff compensation or any financial decision (budgeted or unbudgeted) over \$5,000, a consensus of all deacons must be sought. If a consensus cannot be gained, they will engage in further prayer and discussion. If a consensus still cannot be gained, the deacons shall take a vote requiring the two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of all deacons to pass.
 - iv. The deacons will prayerfully take into account the affirmation of the elder body and the congregation in its decisions.

Section 3. **Church Staffing**

a. **Personnel Committee**

1. The personnel committee shall consist of one non-vocational elder, one deacon, and 5 active church members in good standing appointed by the deacon body.
2. The personnel committee will be responsible to work with the elder and deacon bodies on a continual basis regarding church staffing issues including, but not limited to:
 - i. Evaluation of needs and positions to recommend additions/deletions
 - ii. Search and selection of new hires
 - iii. Annual reviews
 - iv. Changes in salary
 - v. Changes to job descriptions
 - vi. Employee disputes
 - vii. Establishing policies to make the ministry and work of the church staff and employees more effective and meaningful

b. **Vocational Elders (Pastors)**

1. Definition

Vocational elders are defined as those elders who are in the employment of the church as regular, part-time or full-time paid staff. Vocational elders shall receive reasonable compensation for fulfilling their vocational responsibilities as employees of the church.
2. Qualifications

The qualifications for vocational elders are the same as those listed for elders.
3. Selection
 - i. If the elders determine a full-time or part-time vocational elder is needed, they shall task the personnel committee to assist in the selection process.

- ii. The personnel committee shall first look within the current elder and deacon bodies and the congregation at large for candidates that might fulfill the specific job requirements as determined by the elders. If no suitable candidate is found within the church, the personnel committee shall utilize other resources to find additional candidates outside the church.
 - iii. The personnel committee shall, in coordination with the elders, organize and manage the interview process, including screening resumes, background and reference checks, and initial interviews of the candidate and his wife, if married.
 - iv. The personnel committee shall recommend only one candidate at a time to the elders, along with a recommendation to the deacons of compensation commensurate with the candidate's duties, experience, education, etc.
 - v. After his doctrine and character have been examined and proven to meet the qualifications stated herein, and with consensus of the elder body, a man shall be presented to the church by the personnel committee at a church family meeting as a candidate for vocational elder. The members of the church are encouraged to voice both commendations and concerns to the elder body before any prospective vocational elder is appointed. However, final approval of vocational elders will be at the discretion of the elder body.
 - vi. Once a candidate is approved, the personnel committee shall present to the candidate a formal offer of employment including a job description, compensation, and all other benefits, responsibilities, and authorities.
 - vii. Once an offer is accepted, the elders will designate a special church service, or a portion of a regular church service, to affirm and celebrate God's calling on the man's life to the office of vocational elder at WBC.
 - viii. If a vocational elder is called from outside the congregation, membership shall be granted to him (and his wife, if married).
4. Licensing
A vocational elder shall be granted license to the ministry of the church upon his acceptance of an offer of employment. This license will afford him all the privileges granted by civil authorities.
5. Duties / Compensation
- i. The duties and responsibilities of vocational elders shall be determined by the elders, detailed in a written job description, and agreed to by the vocational elder at the time of hire. Any changes in duties or responsibilities must be detailed in a new job description and agreed to by the vocational elder, the personnel committee, and the elder body.
 - ii. Compensation shall be determined at the time of hire. Any changes to compensation shall be determined by the personnel committee, with approval from the deacon board.
 - iii. A vocational elder shall not vote on nor determine his own or another vocational elder's salary or benefits.
6. Terms of Service
- i. Length of Service
 - a. As there is no length of service specified in the Bible, it is understood that vocational elders shall remain in the employment of the church as long as they satisfactorily perform their agreed-upon duties and remain active members of the church in good standing.
 - b. If the elder body determines that a vocational elder needs an extended sabbatical because of a legitimate need (e.g., illness, tragedy), that vocational elder can transition to being an inactive and non-voting elder for a set period of time determined by the elder body. The status of the elder will be communicated to the body.
 - c. To resign from the elder body, a vocational elder must notify the elder body in writing with at least 30 days' notice. The elders will determine the most fruitful and edifying way to notify the church. The deacon body, in conjunction with the personnel committee, will determine the amount, terms, and conditions of any severance package for a vocational elder that has resigned.
 - d. A vacancy on the elder body because of death, resignation, removal or any other cause shall be filled only in the manners prescribed in this Constitution. Such vacancies may be filled at the elder body's discretion.

ii. Removal from Office

- a. Any vocational elder may be removed from office for valid cause, including, but not limited to: gross negligence, dereliction of duty, deletion of position, and lack of church funds. Discipline of elders must be consistent with the standards set forth in Article 2, Section 5 (Church Discipline) and 1 Timothy 5:19-20.
- b. The dismissal of a vocational elder requires the consensus of the elder body (excluding the elder in question) and the affirmation of the active church members.
- c. The elder body may suspend, with pay, a vocational elder in question from some or all of his duties, pending the outcome of the church business meeting. Consensus by the elders is required to suspend pay.
- d. The deacon body, in conjunction with the personnel committee, will determine the amount, terms, and conditions of any severance package for a vocational elder that has been removed.

c. Ministerial

1. Ministerial staff are part-time or full-time paid leaders who do not serve on the elder body.
2. Selection
 - i. If the elders determine a ministerial staff member is needed, they shall task the personnel committee to assist in the selection process.
 - ii. The personnel committee shall first look within the current elder and deacon bodies and the congregation at large for candidates that might fulfill the specific job requirements as determined by the elders. If no suitable candidate is found within the church, the personnel committee shall utilize other resources to find additional candidates outside the church.
 - iii. The personnel committee shall, in coordination with the elders, organize and manage the interview process, including screening resumes, background and reference checks, and initial interviews.
 - iv. The personnel committee shall recommend only one candidate at a time to the elders, along with a recommendation to the deacons of compensation commensurate with the candidate's duties, experience, education, etc., within the parameters of the church-approved annual budget.
3. Members of the ministerial staff are expected to lead in their respective areas of ministry within the parameters of the annual budget. They are subject to the oversight of the elder body.
4. The elders may dismiss ministerial staff for any reason, with consensus of the elder body.
5. Members of the ministerial staff shall provide 14 days written notice to the elder body of their intent to resign.

d. Support

1. Support staff are non-ordained and/or non-licensed employees of the church who help serve the mission of the church in a part-time or full-time, non-ministerial capacity.
2. Selection
 - i. If the deacons determine a support staff member is needed, they shall task the personnel committee to assist in the selection process.
 - ii. The personnel committee shall first look within the congregation at large for candidates that might fulfill the specific job requirements as determined by the deacons. If no suitable candidate is found within the church, the personnel committee shall utilize other resources to find additional candidates outside the church.
 - iii. The personnel committee shall, in coordination with the deacons, organize and manage the interview process, including screening resumes, background and reference checks, and initial interviews.
 - iv. The personnel committee shall recommend only one candidate at a time to the deacons, along with a recommendation of compensation commensurate with the candidate's duties, experience, education, etc., within the parameters of the church-approved annual budget.
3. Members of the support staff are expected to fulfill their responsibilities within the parameters of the annual budget. They are subject to the oversight of the deacon body.
4. The deacons may dismiss support staff at any time with consensus of the deacon body.
5. Members of the support staff shall provide 14 days written notice to the deacons of their intent to resign.

e. **Associate**

1. Associate staff are non-ordained and/or non-licensed casual employees of the church who help serve the mission of the church in an 'as needed' part-time capacity.
2. Members of the associate staff are expected to fulfill their responsibilities within the parameters of the annual budget. They are subject to the oversight of the deacon body. The deacons may hire associate staff, within the parameters of the church-approved annual budget, by a passing vote of the deacon body, and may dismiss associate staff by a passing vote of the deacon body.

Section 4. **Volunteers**

- a. The elder body, or deacon body with elder body approval, may as they see fit appoint individuals to volunteer positions of leadership or oversight of church functions or ministries. They will serve under the direction and management of the elder or deacon body.
- b. The elder body, or deacon body with elder body approval, may as they see fit call for or commission volunteer committees to assist in carrying out church functions or ministries. They will serve under the direction and management of the body that calls them, under those guidelines that are established with the call or commission, within the parameters of this Constitution.

Section 5. **Teachers**

All formal teachers, whether regular, occasional, or special, must be approved by the elders.

Section 6. **Indemnification**

- a. If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim, if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and (d) the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.
- b. At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.
- c. If a majority of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

ARTICLE 7: CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. **Meeting Types**

a. **Church Business Meetings**

1. Church business meetings shall be called for and moderated by the deacons for the purpose of conducting all church business including, but not limited to, the finances of the church.
2. Church business meetings shall be limited to the specific purpose cited in the call, and shall be communicated to the church at least two weeks prior.
3. The annual church business meeting shall be held no later than December 15 for the purpose of voting on the proposed budget for the following year and any other business that may be required.
4. A church business meeting may at any time be called for in writing by at least one-fourth (1/4) of the active members.

b. **Church Family Meetings**

1. Church family meetings shall be called for and moderated by the elders to present or discuss matters pertaining to the mission, ministry, or life of the church.
2. Church family meetings shall be limited to the specific purpose cited in the call, and shall be communicated to the church at least two weeks prior.
3. A church family meeting may at any time be requested in writing by at least one-fourth of the active members.

Section 2. **Conduct**

- a. All congregational meetings are expected to glorify God and be conducted with a sense of decency and order according to Scripture and with an attitude of love and selflessness befitting God's people. 1 Corinthians 14:40, Philippians 2:2-5; Colossians 3:12-17
- b. If any church meeting begins to become disorderly, a time of extended prayer will be called for by the elders, at their discretion, so both peace and order will be restored. In an extreme case where this does not restore order and decorum fitting God's people, additional rules of order regarding public meetings may be used at the discretion of the elders to help specifically with the fairness of discussion.

ARTICLE 8: INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

The interpretation of the meaning and intent of the Constitution shall be the responsibility of the elder body.

ARTICLE 9: NON-PROFIT STATUS

Section 1. WBC is a non-profit, charitable institution functioning within the parameters of governmental guidelines as found in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended; and incorporated and existing under the laws of the State of North Carolina.

Section 2. Notwithstanding any provisions of the Constitution, the Articles of Incorporation of the church, any action taken by the elders or deacons, or any other provisions, the church will not conduct any activities not permitted by (1) a corporation or foundation exempted from the Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended; or (2) a corporation or foundation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as amended.

ARTICLE 10: AFFILIATIONS

WBC is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in the fulfillment of its purposes, the church may voluntarily partner in ministry with other churches, under the supervision of the elders.

ARTICLE 11: OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

Section 1. **Provision for Officers**

There shall be three (3) Officers of the Corporation of the church, appointed by the deacons from the active members: the President, the Treasurer, and the Secretary. The Officers of the Corporation shall perform all necessary legal functions of the Corporation and keep the Official Seal of the Corporation. They shall remain in office for as long as they are capable, worthy, and willing.

Section 2. **Appointment of Officers**

- a. Appointment of Officers of the Corporation may take place at any deacon meeting, when necessary.
- b. For the benefit of the congregation, names of officers shall be made public at the annual church business meeting.

Section 3. **Removal of Officers**

- a. Officers of the Corporation may be removed from office by consensus of the deacons at any time.

ARTICLE 12: PROPERTY

Section 1. **Ownership**

The Corporation of Waxhaw Bible Church, through its duly elected Officers of the Corporation, shall have sole title to its real property, and shall be sole owner of any equity it may have in any real property.

Section 2. **Dissolution, Split, Merger**

- a. It is intended that this church shall be permanently maintained pursuant to the purposes set forth in this Constitution. However:
 1. In the event of the dissolution and/or liquidation of the church, the elders and deacons may distribute the net assets of the church to one or more non-profit organizations, qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended. The distribution will be in accordance with a majority vote of both the elder and deacon bodies.
 2. In the event of irreconcilable differences between factions within the church ('split'), the net assets shall remain the property of the majority.
 3. In the event of a merger of the church with another church, the net assets of the church shall be contributed to the surviving entity.

ARTICLE 13: AMENDMENTS

Section 1. **Provision for Amendments**

This Constitution or any provision contained herein may be altered, amended, repealed or restated, or a new Constitution may be adopted according to the Procedure for Amendments. Such changes may be proposed by any active member of the congregation. Proposed changes must be submitted in writing to the elder body.

Section 2. **Procedure for Amendments**

- a. The proposed change shall be read before at least two meetings of the combined elder and deacon bodies, in a timely fashion, and must be passed by three-fourths (3/4) of the total membership of both bodies before

being submitted to the congregation. After being passed by the elders and deacons, the proposed change shall be submitted to members of the congregation in writing at least two months before a church business meeting to consider its adoption.

- b. The proposed change shall also be published in the church bulletin and/or other means for at least two Sundays before the church business meeting.
- c. Provided a quorum of at least one-half (1/2) of the active membership, a two-thirds (2/3) majority of members present shall be required for passage.

Adopted 8 September 2013