

## **West End Baptist Church – Bylaws (Proposed Revision 11.10.2025)**

### **PREFACE / STATEMENT OF INTENT**

These Bylaws are adopted by the members of West End Baptist Church to provide clear guidance for the governance, order, and practice of the Church in accordance with the Scriptures. They are designed to preserve the unity, liberty, and mission of the congregation, while protecting its spiritual and temporal resources.

### **PREAMBLE**

For the preservation and security of the principles of our faith; to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of the Baptist denomination; for the purpose of sustaining the liberties inherent in each of its members; and for protecting the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relations to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish these Bylaws.

The Mission of West End Baptist Church is to glorify God by making mature disciples of all nations, starting in the West End of Greenville, SC. The purpose of this church is to proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in accordance with the principles of the New Testament, providing opportunities for worship, Christian fellowship, Bible study, discipleship, missions, evangelism, and benevolence.

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### **ARTICLE I – NAME, PRINCIPAL OFFICE, AFFILIATION, LEGAL STATUS, DISSOLUTION**

**Section 1. Name** – The name of the corporation is West End Baptist Church of Greenville, South Carolina. Organized as a mission of First Baptist Church on March 18, 1889, previous names include Anderson Street Mission, Second Baptist Church, West End Baptist Church, and most recently, Pendleton Street Baptist Church. The corporation will be referred to herein as the “Church.”

**Section 2. Principal Office** – The Church maintains its principal office at 123 Arlington Ave, Greenville, SC 29601. The location may be changed as necessary by Church action.

**Section 3. Affiliation** – This Church is autonomous, pastor/elder-led and congregational in form. It is not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body but recognizes the value of cooperation and fellowship with other Baptist churches. The Church voluntarily affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention, the South Carolina Baptist Convention, and the Greenville Baptist Association. This Church accepts the Holy Scriptures as the sole authority in all matters of faith and doctrine.

**Section 4. Nonprofit Status** – The Church is organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. No part of the net earnings shall inure to any private individual.

**Section 5. Dissolution** – Upon dissolution, remaining assets shall be distributed to organizations consistent with doctrinal beliefs. No assets shall go to individual members.

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## **ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1. Qualifications:** The New Testament presents the church as a definable group of people who are believers and identify themselves with and are committed to a particular local body of believers. (Acts 2:42-46; Romans 16:1; I Corinthians 1:2; II Corinthians 8:1; Philippians 1:1; Acts 11:26).

Membership shall be open to those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and who have been baptized by immersion. Candidates must:

1. Complete the new members class, and
2. Subscribe to the Church Covenant.

The membership reserves the right to determine who shall be members and the conditions of membership. Members absent from all regularly scheduled services for six (6) months, without reasonable cause, become *inactive*. *Active* status is restored by demonstrating regular attendance over a three-month period.

**Section 2. Responsibilities:** Members are expected to:

1. **Unity** – Work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
2. **Lifestyle** – Pursue spiritual growth, living in accordance with Scripture.
3. **Participation** – Support the ministry by faithful attendance, prayer, and regular giving; participate in the ordinances, discipline, and doctrine of the Church.
4. **Service** – Use their gifts to serve the Church and community.

**Section 3. Voting Rights:** Active members 16 years and older may vote on the following:

1. Annual budget approval (2/3 vote).
2. Acquisition or disposition of real property and related indebtedness (2/3 vote).
3. Merger or dissolution of the Church (2/3 vote).
4. Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws (2/3 vote).
5. Calling or removing the Pastors/Elders (3/4 vote).
6. Election and removal of officers and deacons. (3/4 vote)

7. Other matters as determined by the Elders.

Votes must be cast in person; proxy or absentee voting is not permitted.

**Section 4. Termination of Membership:** Membership may be terminated by:

1. Transfer by letter to a church of like faith and order.
2. Written request of the member.
3. Proof of membership in another denomination.
4. Dismissal according to church discipline policy.

**Section 5. Church Discipline:** The Church shall practice discipline in a spirit of humility and love, seeking repentance, restoration, and the purity of Christ's body (Matthew 18:15–20; Galatians 6:1–2).

1. **Purpose:** Church discipline is exercised to restore the erring, protect the flock, and preserve the testimony of the gospel.
2. **Process:** Discipline shall follow the biblical steps outlined in Matthew 18.
  - Private admonition should first be pursued.
  - If repentance is not forthcoming, witnesses and, when necessary, the elders shall be involved.
  - Final action, when required, shall be taken by the congregation upon recommendation of the elders.
3. **Grounds:** Members may be subject to discipline or removal for
  - Persistent, unrepentant sin;
  - Conduct contrary to the Church Covenant or sound doctrine per the Statement of Beliefs; or
  - Inactivity or lack of response to pastoral care for twelve months or more.
4. **Authority:** The elders shall lead the process and retain final authority in all matters of membership discipline, reporting such matters to the congregation.
5. **Restoration:** Upon genuine repentance, a disciplined member may be restored to full fellowship by the elders with congregational affirmation.

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### ARTICLE III – MEETINGS

The Church shall hold annual, family, and special meetings for worship, teaching, training, outreach, fellowship, and the Lord's Supper.

1. **Annual Meeting** – Held on or before the third Sunday in January to adopt a ministry plan and budget.
2. **Family Meetings** – Called by the elders as needed, with proper notice.
3. **Notification** – Members shall receive at least seven (7) days' notice of meetings requiring action, via pulpit announcement, bulletin, mail, or electronic means.

4. **Voting** – Voice, hand-raising, or secret ballot (for staff, elections, or sensitive matters). Ballots will be collected and reported by the deacons.
5. **Quorum** – Consists of those members present and voting at a duly called meeting.
6. **Electronic Meetings** – Allowed in emergencies with verified member identity and approved procedures.

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## ARTICLE IV – CHURCH PROGRAMS & ORDINANCES

1. Church Programs: The Church shall maintain programs for worship, discipleship, missions, evangelism, and ministry. Leaders shall be approved by the Elders and report on activities. Details shall be defined in the **Manual of Policies and Procedures**.
2. Church Ordinances: This Church recognizes two ordinances instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ: **baptism** and the **Lord's Supper**.
  - **Baptism** is the immersion of a believer in water, symbolizing faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and identifying the believer with Christ and His Church.
  - **The Lord's Supper** is a memorial ordinance, in which baptized believers partake of the bread and cup in remembrance of Christ's death until He returns.

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## ARTICLE V – CHURCH GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

**Section 1. Authority of the Congregation** – The government of this church is vested in the congregation, consisting of those who have been formally received into covenant membership as baptized believers. The congregation exercises authority in the following areas:

- Membership reception.
- Election and removal of officers, elders, and deacons.
- Approval of budget and major financial commitments.
- Amendments to bylaws.
- Calling or dismissing the Senior Pastor and pastoral staff.
- Property and incorporation matters.
- Merger or dissolution of the Church

### Section 2. Elders

1. **Definition and Role:** Elders are biblically qualified men charged with shepherding the flock, teaching Scripture, overseeing doctrine and discipleship, and directing the

overall ministry of the church. Elders are responsible for the spiritual oversight of the congregation and for providing pastoral care.

2. **Plurality and Senior Pastor:** The Church shall be led by a plurality of elders, both vocational and non-vocational. Among them, the Senior Pastor serves as first among equals, bearing primary responsibility for public preaching, vision-casting, and convening and ordinarily leading elder meetings. The Senior Pastor shall have an equal vote with the other elders on all elder decisions, with the following specific responsibilities:
  - The call or hiring of any paid staff member or vocational elder shall require the concurrence of the Senior Pastor. Without his concurrence, the process shall not move forward unless and until he withdraws his objection.
  - The Senior Pastor shall have the authority, after appropriate consultation with the elders, to terminate the employment of any paid staff member.
3. **Qualifications:** Elders must meet the biblical qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9, and affirm the church’s Statement of Faith and Covenant. Elders must be male and members in good standing.
4. **Selection and Call:** Elders shall be nominated by the elders or a designated nominating committee, examined and recommended by the elders, approved by a congregational vote, and ordained by the church. The Senior Pastor shall be called by congregational vote following a search process (see **Manual of Policies and Procedures**). A supermajority of three-fourths (3/4) of voting members present shall be required to call a Senior Pastor.
5. **Term of Service:** Vocational elders, including the Senior Pastor, normally serve without fixed term. Non-vocational elders typically serve three-year terms and may be re-elected, subject to periodic review.
6. **Decision-Making:** The elders shall seek unanimity. If unanimity cannot be reached, a decision may proceed with the agreement of at least two-thirds of the elders present and participating. The Senior Pastor’s role is *first among equals* and does not grant an extra vote.
7. **Senior Pastor Search and Transition:** When a Senior Pastor vacancy occurs, the elders shall convene a Search Committee, which shall bring a candidate to the elders for examination and to the congregation for a vote. The elders shall also provide for interim pastoral leadership as needed.
8. **Removal:** An elder may be removed for cause (doctrinal error, moral failure, persistent neglect of duties) by a three-quarter (3/4) congregational vote after an elder-led investigation and opportunity for defense. Emergency suspension may be effected by the elders pending congregational action.

### **Section 3: Deacons**

1. **Definition and Role:** Deacons are biblically qualified servants who care for physical, practical, and mercy ministries so elders may focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word. Deacons function under elder oversight.
2. **Qualifications:** Deacons must meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8–13, affirm the church’s Statement of Faith, and be members in good standing. The Church may appoint both men and women to serve.
3. **Selection:** Deacons shall be nominated by the elders or a nominating committee, examined and recommended by the elders, and approved by congregational vote.
4. **Term of Service:** Deacons serve three-year terms and may be re-elected for successive terms as the congregation allows.
5. **Removal:** A deacon may be removed by a two-thirds congregational vote for failure to maintain qualifications or for neglect/misconduct.

### **Section 4: Other Officers and Staff**

1. The church shall elect officers required by civil law--Pastor (President), a non-vocational Elder (Vice President), Clerk (Secretary), Treasurer (Treasurer)--and such other officers as the congregation deems necessary.
2. Officers and staff shall be members in good standing, elected by the congregation or appointed by the elders as specified at time of appointment, and serve according to terms set at election.
3. All vocational staff report to the elders; the elders shall establish a clear reporting and supervisory structure.

### **Section 5 — Conflicts of Interest, Confidentiality, and Indemnification**

1. Elders, deacons, officers, and active members shall disclose conflicts of interest and recuse themselves when appropriate.
2. Personnel and disciplinary matters shall be handled confidentially by the elders, with disclosure to the congregation only as necessary for protection, restoration, or legal compliance.
3. The church will protect and hold harmless its officers, elders, deacons, and active members from personal liability for actions taken in good faith while carrying out their duties according to Scripture and these bylaws. This protection does not extend to actions involving gross negligence, willful wrongdoing, or illegal conduct.

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## **ARTICLE VI – CHURCH COMMITTEES**

Committees (both standing committees and special committees) are established to assist the congregation in planning, managing resources, and overseeing ministry activities. Specific duties are defined in the **Manual of Policies and Procedures**.

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#### **ARTICLE VII – FISCAL YEAR AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. The Church's fiscal year shall be January 1 – December 31. An annual budget shall be presented for congregational approval.
  2. The financial records shall be reviewed annually by an external auditor.
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#### **ARTICLE VIII – MESSENGERS**

Messengers to denominational meetings shall be elected by the Church. The pastors shall serve by virtue of office and recommend additional messengers for congregational approval.

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#### **ARTICLE IX – PUBLICATION OF BYLAWS**

Bylaws shall be published with the membership directory whenever issued.

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#### **ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be amended by two-thirds of members present and voting, provided notice and text of proposed changes are given at least fifteen (15) days prior by pulpit announcement, letter, or newsletter. Proposed amendments shall be reviewed by the elders for consistency with the church's statement of faith before being presented to the congregation.

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#### **ARTICLE XI – CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

West End Baptist Church is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and youth. All staff and volunteers working with minors shall be screened, trained, and supervised according to Scripture, church policy, and applicable law. Suspected abuse must be reported promptly to the church elders and civil authorities. The church shall maintain a detailed Child and Youth Protection Policy, which all leaders and volunteers are required to follow.

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#### **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix I – Church Covenant**

## **Appendix II – Statement of Faith**

### Appendix I

## Church Covenant

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and 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.

We affirm and embrace the mission and values that God has given West End Baptist Church.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Holy Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3) and to practice brotherly love in our relationships (Romans 12:10).

We will pursue God's continual work of sanctification in our lives (Philippians 1:6, 2:12-13).

We will use our gifts and resources for the glory of God and the common good of the church. (1 Corinthians 12, Hebrews 10:25, 1 Thessalonians 5:11-13)

We will engage in good works and to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ at home and around the world. (Ephesians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 5:20)

We moreover engage that if we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this Covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## Appendix II

# WE BELIEVE...

## The Bible

The Bible was written by men verbally inspired by God, and is complete in the 66 books it contains. God has protected and preserved the Bible for us, so that we have truth without any error. The Bible is sufficient and is our only source of authority for belief and behavior. (Psalm 19:7-10; Psalm 119:97-104; Psalm 119:160; Matthew 5:18; John 5:46-47; John 10:35; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Jude 1:3)

## God

There is only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being. He has revealed Himself to us in Scripture and creation. He is the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is holy. God is all powerful, everywhere at all times, and all knowing. The eternal God shows Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three have separate personal characteristics. There is no difference in their nature, essence, or being. (Deuteronomy 6:5; John 17:3; Isaiah 45:5, 21; Romans 1:19-20; John 1:18; Acts 17:23-24; Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37; Psalm 147:4-5; Psalm 139:8)

## God the Father

God the Father is the first person of the Trinity in authority. He sovereignly reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the course of human history according to His purposes and for His glory. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all people. (Isaiah 64:8; Matthew 6:9-11; John 1:12; Romans 8:15-16)

## God the Son

Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, was born of a virgin, is wholly God and wholly man, lived a sinless life, died as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of mankind, was buried, arose from the grave, defeating the power of sin and death. He ascended to Heaven and will literally, bodily return to the earth to reign as King of Kings. (Matthew 1:22; John 1:1-5; John 14:10-30; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 1:3-4; I Corinthians 15:3-4; I Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 4:14-15)

## God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily. (2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Philippians 2:13; Ephesians 1:13, 5:18)

## Salvation

Salvation is needed by all people. It is a free gift of God provided through Jesus Christ, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for those who believe. Salvation is granted to those who respond in repentance and faith to the conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit. When a person is saved he/she is born again (regenerated) by the Holy Spirit, and is a new creation. There is always evidence of this change in the life of the believer (fruit). (Romans 3; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 6:23; Acts 4:12; Hebrews 7:25; John 14:6; Matthew 4:17; Mark 6:12; Romans 10:9-10; John 15:5; 1 John 3:4-6; Hebrews 10:26)

## Man

God created man, both male and female, in His own image as the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was given freedom of choice by God. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God and fell from his sinless state, bringing sin into the human race. Consequently, all mankind is sinful by inheritance and by choice. Therefore, mankind is under just condemnation without defense or excuse, depraved and in need of a Savior. (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 1:21; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Romans 6:6, 12, 17; Galatians 5:24; Ephesians 2:1-4; John 3:17-18)

## The Church

The local church is an autonomous congregation of baptized believers under the headship of Jesus Christ, associated by covenant, observing the two ordinances of Christ (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), exercising gifts for the strengthening of the body, with the purpose of glorifying God and making disciples. The Church is the people of God, under the headship of God, led by the Word of God, empowered by the Spirit of God, to accomplish the purposes of God, for the glory of God. (Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Acts 2:41; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:5-13; Ephesians 2:18-22; Matthew 26:26-29; Romans 12:1-8)

## Eternity

We believe in the "blessed hope," the personal, literal return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every person will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost. The saved are raised to eternal life in heaven. The lost are raised to eternal torment in hell in conscious separation from God. (Hebrews 9:27; Titus 2:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:31-34; John 14:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5; Matthew 10:28; Matthew 13:49-50; Luke 12:54; Revelation 21:8)

## Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We believe that God created marriage, and the term "marriage" has only one meaning; it is a holy institution which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. Thus, any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, cohabitation, homosexuality, lesbianism, pedophilia, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, and attempting to change one's biological sex or otherwise acting upon any disagreement with one's biological sex) is sinful and offensive to God. (Genesis 1:27, 2:18, 24, Mark 1:9, Hebrews 13:4, Mark 10:6-9, Romans 1:18-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21; Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; Romans 1:29; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Colossians 3:5; Revelation 9:21)

