

Constitution of the East White Oak Bible Church

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CONSTITUTION OF THE EAST WHITE OAK BIBLE CHURCH

Article I - Purpose

The Purpose of this Church is to glorify our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, at home and abroad, through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, the salvation of souls, and the promotion of Christian fellowship among believers of like faith.

MISSION STATEMENT

MINISTRY STATEMENT:

The mission of East White Oak Bible Church, consistent with Christ's command, is to make disciples of every person available to us, by orienting them to a deeper understanding of, and a more complete obedience to the triune God, as He is revealed in His Word, the Bible.

MINISTRY PROFILE:

East White Oak Bible Church is a voluntary fellowship of redeemed believers committed to evangelical doctrine who have experienced personal faith in Christ; and who, being organized under qualified leaders, plan to carry forward our mission by seeking to implement the following Biblical mandates. We recognize that our progress depends on the working of God's Spirit through prayer, and that the ultimate goal is to do all to the glory of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

MINISTRY MANDATES:

WORSHIP AND STUDY: To provide opportunities for the study of God (from His Word) with a view to worshipping Him, Father, Son, and Spirit.

EQUIPPING AND SERVING: To maintain an effective educational program for believers and families, that will equip and prepare them for Christian living, and service, in the church and in the world.

OUTREACH: To maintain an aggressive witness for Christ in our local area (in cooperation with other like-minded churches and

believers); and to participate in extending the witness of Christ all around the world.

FELLOWSHIP: To provide an opportunity for people to be encouraged through supportive relationships in easily accessed Christian fellowship.

Article II - Confession of Faith

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES:

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God breathed, the final authority for faith and life. (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 5:18; Rev. 22:18-19)

THE GODHEAD:

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deut. 6:4; II Cor. 13:14; Matt. 28:19)

GOD THE FATHER: (The Person and the work)

We believe in God, the Father, Creator, an infinite personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, justice, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men; that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (Gen. 1:1; I Chron. 29:11; Isaiah 37:16; John 3:16, 4:24, 14:6; Rom. 11:33; I Pet. 3:12; Rev. 4:8)

GOD, THE SON: (The Person and work)

- (a) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 2, 14)
- (b) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His

literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; I Peter 1:3-5; 2:24)

- (c) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Mediator, Intercessor and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Rom. 8:34; I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; I John 2:1-2)

GOD, THE HOLY SPIRIT: (The Person and work)

- (a) We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ; indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; II Cor. 3:6; I Cor. 12:12-14; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13-14)
- (b) We believe that He 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 with the Spirit. (John 16:13; I John 2:20, 27; Eph. 5:18)

THE FALL OF MAN:

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and, that man is totally depraved, and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; Eph. 2:1-3, 12)

SALVATION:

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by His grace, and that man is born again into the unity of God by personal faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (Eph. 2:8-10; John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; I Peter 1:18-19)

ETERNAL SECURITY AND ASSURANCE OF BELIEVERS:

- (a) We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. Only true believers are eternally secure, and all who are merely make believers are yet in their sins. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; I Peter 1:5; Philippians 1:6)

- (b) We believe it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word; which however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Rom. 8:1, 38-39; John 5:11-13; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

THE TWO NATURES OF THE BELIEVER:

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and, that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. (Rom. 6:12-13; 7:15-25; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24)

SEPARATION:

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; that separation is commanded by God from those who " . . . abide not in the doctrine of Christ," and from all sinful, worldly pleasures and practices. We further believe that the Scripture plainly teaches that "those born again" should not marry or have other entangling alliances with unbelievers. (II Cor. 6:14-7:1; II Tim. 2:19; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11)

THE CHURCH:

- (a) We believe in the universal Church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the Head, made up of all born again believers of this present Church age. Its mission is to witness concerning its Head, Christ Jesus, by spreading of the Gospel among all nations. (Matt. 28:19-20; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27; I Cor. 12:12-14; II Cor. 11:2)
- (b) We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (Acts 14:27; 20:28-32; I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11)

THE MINISTRY AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

- (a) We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and, that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and, that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established. (I Cor. 12:4-11; II Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12)

- (b) We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and afflicted. (John 15:7; I John 5:14-15)

THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN:

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the fall; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:1-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10; I Peter 5:8)

THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST:

We believe in that "Blessed Hope", the personal, imminent, pre tribulation, and pre millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth, with His saints, to establish His Millennial Kingdom. (Zech. 14:4-11; Luke 21:36; I Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:9; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

THE ETERNAL STATE:

- (a) We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men; the saved to eternal life with God, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment, forever separated from God in the Lake of Fire. (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13, 15; 21:8)
- (b) We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23, 3:21; I Thess. 4:16-18; Rev. 20:4-6)
- (c) We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with 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. (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; II Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:10-15)

Article III - Ordinances

We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances that Jesus Christ has appointed to the Church. They are not to be regarded, however, as a means of salvation.

The ordinance of Baptism shall be administered by the Pastor to anyone who has given evidence of having accepted Christ as personal Savior, at such time as shall be arranged with the Pastor. Children may be dedicated at any of the services at the option of the Pastor.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed generally on the first Sunday of each even numbered month of the year, and at such other times as the Elders may designate. The Elders shall be in charge of the administration of the Lord's Supper. All present who acknowledge Christ as their Savior are invited to share in the observance, whether members of this congregation or not.

Article IV - Dedication of Children

It is the privilege and duty of Christian parents to dedicate their children to the Lord, that the parents might be instructed and that the child might be made the subject of united prayer. However, dedication does not take the place of the New Birth, which is a necessity for every person. (Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17; and John 3:3. Also see "Salvation" in Article II of this constitution.)

Article V - Spiritual Leaders

The spiritual leaders of the Church shall include appointed officers, leaders and teachers of the Church. Any spiritual leader, if not an Active Member of the Church, must be in agreement with the doctrine of the Church and must be approved by the Elders. (See "Confession of Faith", Article II of this constitution and "Membership", Section I of the By-Laws.)

Article VI - Church Government - Policy

We believe that the government of the local church should be autonomous, democratic and simple - sufficient to allow things to be done decently and in order. Final authority in this Church shall be vested in its membership, and all business and government must be conducted in accordance with the stipulations of this constitution and by laws. Although this local Church is independent, we reject that independence of attitude that has no respect for God-given leadership, discipline or the welfare of others.

While the final voice of authority is that of the membership, we choose our leaders under the guidance of God, expecting most matters of business and government to be carried on by those leaders. Those matters considered to be of major importance will be presented to the membership at a business meeting for approval. ("See Church Government - Administration, Section III of the by laws.)

Article VII – Statement on Marriage

At East White Oak Bible Church, we pledge to honor the Lord by committing ourselves afresh to the first institution ordained by God – marriage. We believe that marriage is a union of one woman and one man in which they commit, with God’s help, to building a loving, faithful relationship that lasts for a life time.

Marriage is formed by virtue of a solemn oath, uttered to God, which forms a permanent, covenantal, unbreakable union of family and kin. God has established this union for the benefit of humanity, its purposes including:

- Loving, lifelong companionship
- Procreation and nurture of children
- Expressions of sexual intimacy according to biblical standards
- A lasting and God-honoring family legacy
- A vision of God’s own covenantal love and redemption

A husband and wife are to seek unity of purpose in their marriage, understanding that the husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are made in God's image. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church. A wife is to respect her husband as the church gladly respects Christ as the head of the church.

We believe that when marriage is true to its design it brings spiritual, physical, emotional, economic, and social benefits not only to a family but also to the church and to the wider culture. Therefore we all have a stake in the well being of marriages. So we pledge to fight for intact, loving and fruitful marriages. We obligate ourselves to prepare, strengthen, and support marriages. Strong marriages should form part of the foundation of our ministry.

We pledge to fight off the evil influences that lead to divorce, cohabitation, adultery, diminished interest in and poor preparation for marriage. We pledge to nurture the marriages in our midst. We will not settle for the unscriptural pathway of divorce but pledge to seek to restore broken and troubled marriages.

Thus we will pray for marriages, we will encourage people to marry as they are ready and prepared, we will educate young people concerning the responsibilities and meaning of marriage, and we will seek to influence the wider culture to uphold the ordinance of marriage.

Through this commitment to marriage, we trust that the nature of God's kingdom will be more clearly revealed in our homes and church. To that end we pray and labor seeking the help of God.

Sources consulted: The Baptist Faith and Message, Article XVIII, A Christian Declaration on Marriage – 2000.

(Adopted 07-12-09)

BY-LAWS OF THE EAST WHITE OAK BIBLE CHURCH

Section I - Membership

A. Qualifications

1. Any person who has accepted Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior shall be eligible for membership.
2. Candidates shall be required to affirm their agreement with the doctrine and constitution of the Church.
3. Candidates for membership must have been baptized as a believer. (added 3-21-04)

B. Admission to Membership

1. Believers may be received into membership upon confession of faith or upon a statement of faith with a letter of recommendation from their previous church.
2. Application for membership shall be made to the Elders.
3. Applicants shall meet with the Elders or their designees to give personal testimony with regard to their salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to their Christian experience.
4. Upon the recommendation of the Elders, the Church shall receive the candidate into membership. The candidate shall be welcomed into membership in the presence of the worshipping congregation.
5. The Pastor and his wife shall automatically become members of this Church upon taking up duties as Pastor.

C. Classes of Membership

1. Active membership shall consist of such Christians as have been received in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and who are not members of any other church.
 - a. Active members who have reached the age of 16 years shall be entitled to vote, and shall be encouraged to meet with the Elders for understanding of their privileges and responsibilities as voting members.
 - b. No minimum age shall be set for membership. The fitness of each applicant who is under voting age shall be determined by the Elders.
2. Inactive membership shall consist of the following:
 - a. Those who no longer have residence in this area, but still desire to hold their membership in this Church;
 - b. Those who have been absent from the services of the Church for a prolonged period of time without giving a satisfactory reason for such absence;
 - c. Those who have come under disciplinary action of the Church.

Inactive members shall not have the right to vote or hold office in the Church. At the discretion of the Elders, inactive members may be removed from the rolls.

D. Conduct of Members

1. Regular attendance at the services of the Church, unless providentially hindered, shall be urged upon all members. Members are encouraged to practice daily and systematic reading of the Bible, private and family prayer, personal and public testimony and the winning of others to Christ. (Heb. 10:25; II Tim. 2:15)

2. It is our belief that the method of financing the Lord's work should be by the free will offerings of consecrated hearts. We pledge ourselves to systematic and proportionate contributions for the support of this church and missionary program, as the Lord has prospered us and in accord with His Scriptures. (I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:7)
3. We shall urge upon each other, in our daily walk and conversation, loyal obedience to all those moral precepts laid down in the Word of God so plainly as not to need definition.
4. If any charge is to be brought against any member, it must be delivered in writing to the Elders who shall make recommendations according to the charge. (Matt. 18:15-17)

E. Letter of Transfer

1. Members may be released from the Church at their own request. Letters of recommendation will be sent directly to the church with which they wish to unite.
2. Applicants for membership who have letters of recommendation sent from their previous church may be admitted as provided in Section B, Admission to Membership.

Section II - The Pastor

A. Responsibilities

The Senior Pastor, together with all staff pastors, as spiritual leaders and shepherds of the flock, shall conscientiously perform those duties generally associated with their office, preaching the Word, caring for the spiritual welfare of the members and having general oversight of the regular services of the Church.

By virtue of his office, the Senior Pastor shall be an official member of the Elders, and an ex-officio member of all other church organizations and committees. (revised 03-26-06)

B. Calling a Pastor

Pastoral Search Committees for full time pastoral staff shall be appointed and authorized by the Elders and shall consist of members in good standing. Current pastoral staff may be assigned to the committee as members at the discretion of the Elders. Any candidate recommended to the church must subscribe to the constitution of this church and pastoral searches should comport with existing church policy.

The pastoral search committee shall report to the Elders regarding the final candidate selected by the committee. Upon 2/3 approval of the Elders, such a candidate will be recommended to the Church congregation for a vote on extending a call to the pastoral staff. The vote is to be taken at a business meeting of the congregation (See Section IV of these By-Laws), and shall require a 2/3 majority for approval. (revised 03-26-06)

C. Termination of Service

The relationship between Pastor and Church may be dissolved by either, upon the giving of two months notice, or otherwise if by mutual consent.

If any charge is made against the Pastor, it must be delivered in writing to the Elders.

In the event that the congregation loses confidence in the Pastor's leadership or feels that his ministry is ended, the Elders will first hear discussion. A majority vote of the Elders will be required to take the question before the congregation. At a special congregational business meeting called for this purpose, a majority of the votes cast by members present would be required for termination of the Pastor's services.

In the event of doctrinal or moral defection, the Pastor's services may be suspended immediately by action of the Elders, with termination of service to be ratified by a vote of the congregation within thirty days.

D. Pastoral Associates

Any pastoral associates authorized by the Elders and the congregation shall perform such duties as designated by the Elders. After one year of full time ministry, a pastoral associate is eligible to become an Elder, upon the approval of the Elders. (revised 03-21-04)

E. **Guest Speakers**

The Church does not permit a minister or speaker unknown to the Pastor to occupy the pulpit without approval from the Elders.

Section III - Church Government - Administration

East White Oak shall be governed by a team of Biblically qualified men, who are members of the church, serving in two capacities:

1. Elders, who have responsibility for the oversight of the ministry as described by the New Testament.
2. Deacons, who have responsibility for designated matters essential to the church, as indicated by the Elders.

A. Relationship to body:

The New Testament calls the church to respect, love and obey its leaders (Elders and Deacons), while the leaders are to elicit and earn this respect, love and obedience by their own loving and Godly example.

B. Appointment:

Elders and Deacons shall be appointed by the existing Elders at any time, subject to congregational confirmation. The Elders may establish their own officers, and sub-committees, and ministry assignments as needed for the oversight of the church.

C. Term and number:

Elders may be appointed for two three-year terms (to be staggered) at which time a sabbatical year is called for. The Elders shall fix the terms of the Deacons. The number of Elders shall exceed the number of vocational pastoral staff, assuming a sufficient number of available and qualified men.

D. Discipline:

The discipline of Elders shall be according to 1 Timothy 5:19-22. Individual Elders are subject to the will of their fellow Elders.

E. Duties:

(1) Elders shall carry out their oversight in the spirit and manner prescribed in the New Testament, which at East White Oak shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) The prayerful leadership of the ministry.
- (b) The pastoral care and spiritual direction of the congregation.
- (c) The careful management of church programs, ministry, property, and staff.

(This includes the responsibility to appoint/relieve officers, teachers, ministry teams and directors, etc. as needed, at any time, for the carrying on of the ministry. Such appointees shall report to the Elders or their designee.)

- (d) The wise assignment of service to the body.

(This includes the responsibility to make assignments and fix terms for those appointed to service in the ministry of the church. All appointments shall be reviewed prior to the time of the annual meeting, at which time the congregation shall have opportunity to review and confirm all appointments.)

- (e) The judicious stewardship of church finances.

(An annual accounting shall be made to the congregation at the time of the annual meeting by the Elders or their designees. No expenditures of over \$20,000 shall be made without a presentation for approval at a business meeting of the congregation.

- (f) The earnest representation of the church in the community.

(This includes official authorization to act as the representatives of the church in the community for

matters pertaining to the life and ministry of the church.)

2. Deacons shall be assigned to their designated duties and shall be accountable to the Elders as indicated.

Section IV - Business Meetings (of the Congregation)

- A. The Annual Meeting of the Church shall take place at a reasonable time near to the end of the church's fiscal year, as designated by the Elders. (revised June 23, 2002)
- B. Special congregational business meetings may be called by the Elders at any time, provided that (except for urgent matters) notice of the meeting be given at the Sunday services before the meeting is to be held.
- C. At the Church business meetings, there shall be at least seventy voting members present to constitute a quorum to transact business for the Church. A majority of the voting members present is needed to approve any action except for those matters specified in Sections II, V, and VIII of these By-Laws.

Section V - Ordination

When in the judgment of the Elders, a man in our membership is called to the Christian Ministry, the Elders may recommend that a council of ordination be convened. Such a recommendation shall require a two thirds vote of approval by the Elders. The Elders are charged with the responsibility of approving only those candidates who have been called to the gospel ministry; men who are qualified to do this work, and men whose personal habits are such as not to bring reproach upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A request by the Elders for a Council of Ordination shall be presented at a business meeting of the congregation. The intent to request this Council shall be included in the announcement of the business meeting. Approval of the Elders request shall require a two thirds majority of the voting Church

members present at the business meeting. Upon congregational approval, the Elders shall have the power to call and conduct a Council for examination of the candidate and for ordination, if approved by the Council.

It shall be within the power of the Elders, with the advice and cooperation of the Church, to discipline any minister whom it has ordained in the event that the minister is proved guilty of manifestly unChristian acts which contradict the plain teaching of the Word of God.

Section VI - Commissioning of Missionaries

When a member of our congregation has been accepted for missionary assignment by a mission board whose doctrinal statement is in accord with our own, the Church may hold an appropriate commissioning service. The service would be authorized by the Elders.

Section VII - Church Property

A. All property belonging to the Church shall remain intact. Members severing their connections with the Church, for whatever reasons, relinquish all claims to its property.

In the event of a division of the Church, the property shall revert to that group which adheres to this constitution.

B. Dissolution. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director or officer of the corporation or any private individual. No donor, member, director, officer of the corporation or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporation assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the corporation must be distributed to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized exclusively for religious purposes, and whose doctrinal position and work shall be as similar in nature as possible to those of Article II of the constitution of the East White Oak Bible Church.

In the event of the pre-tribulation and pre-Millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church, then the assets of the Corporation

shall be distributed to Jewish organizations whose teachings are such as to advocate the approaching reign of the Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom.

Section VIII - Amendments

The Church may make any change in this constitution or its By-Laws which seems wise or necessary. Any such amendment must first be approved by the Elders and be submitted in writing to the members at least two weeks prior to the congregational business meeting at which it will be considered. The amendment shall be adopted if approved by two thirds of the voting members present, provided there is a quorum.

Committee Appointed - July 9, 1973

Revised - Dec. 31, 1975

Revised -- Jan. 19, 1978

Revised -- March 19, 1981

Revised - March 22, 1984

Revised – Dec. 8, 1985

Revised – Nov. 15, 1992

Revised – Jan. 4, 1998

Revised – June 23, 2002

Revised – March 21, 2004

Revised – March 26, 2006

Revised – July 12, 2009