

**CONSTITUTION
OF THE
WEST MEADE FELLOWSHIP**

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the West Meade Fellowship of Nashville, Tennessee, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I

Name and Purpose

The name of this church shall be The West Meade Fellowship.

The purpose of this church is to raise up a testimony and witness true to the doctrine taught in the infallible Word of God, to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE II

Doctrine

Section 1. Statement of Doctrine.

(1) The Holy Scriptures. We believe the Holy Scriptures, both the Old and New Testament, to be both the verbal and inspired Word of God, authoritative, inerrant, infallible, complete^{*5}, and God-breathed. (*Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:17-21*)

(2) The Godhead. We believe in one Holy Trinity, existing in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; eternal in being; identical in essence; equal in power and glory; and having the same attributes and perfection. (*Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14*)

(3) The Total Depravity 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, became

alienated from God and is totally unable to regain his former position apart from God's grace. (*Genesis 1:26; 3:1-24; Romans 3:23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; 2:12*)

(4) The Person and Work of Christ. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. We believe that He accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice. We believe that all children who die before the age of accountability and all persons who have never had the mental capacity to understand the plan of salvation are saved through the grace of Jesus Christ and that our redemption and salvation is guaranteed to us by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (*Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 14; 18; Romans 3:24-26; 4:23-25*)

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven, exalted to the right hand of God, where as His people's High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of intercession and advocacy. (*John 18:16-17; Hebrews 1:3; 3:1; 7:23-25; 9:24; 12:2; 1 John 2:1-2*)

(5) The Personality of the Holy Spirit. We believe the Holy Spirit is the person who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He also in the present age regenerates believers in Christ, baptizes them into the Church, the body of Christ, and indwells them permanently, seals them into the day of redemption, bestows spiritual gifts upon each one, and fills those yielded to Him. (*John 3:8; 10:27-30; 14:16; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 13; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18*)

(6) Salvation. We believe that salvation is a gift of God in grace and is received by man through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ whose precious blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. Salvation is a spiritual rebirth which is an Act of God and not of man. (*John 1:12; 3:3-8; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9; 1 Peter 1:23*)

(7) The Eternal Security of the Believer. We believe that all true believers, once saved, are kept secure in Christ forever. Those whom God has justified, he will also glorify. Consequently, the truly regenerated soul will not totally fall away from a state of grace, but will be preserved to everlasting life. The preservation of believers depends on the unchangeable love and power of God and the nature of the Covenant of Grace. True believers may fall into sin but will never rest or find satisfaction except in the full fellowship of God. (*John 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 29-30, 38-39*)

(8) The Church. We believe that the Church, the body and bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age, irrespective of their affiliation with any Christian organization. (*Matthew 18:20; John 3:3; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27; 1 John 3:9*)

(9) The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts, which are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today. (*1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:9-11*)

(10) The Priesthood of the Believer. We believe in the priesthood of the believer. That is to say all people born of God have equal status before, and direct access to, our Lord. We believe every man is his own priest. (*1 Peter 2:5*)

(11) The Second Coming of Christ. We believe in the personal, imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His own, the Church (the rapture), and His subsequent premillennial return (the second coming) to earth to set up His kingdom. (*Zechariah 14:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 4:13-18; Revelation 20:6*)

(12) The Eternal State. We believe that the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do at death immediately pass into His presence, and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming for the church, when soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory; but the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery until the final judgment of the great white throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. (*Luke 16:19-26; 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15*)

(13) The Responsibility of the Believer. We believe that all believers should seek to walk by the Spirit, not bringing reproach upon their Lord and Savior, and that believers are to serve the Lord in holiness, righteousness, and humility all the days of their life. (*Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; Galatians 5:16, 25; 1 Peter 5:5-6*)

We believe that it is the obligation of every believer to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the gospel to all the world.

We believe that it is the responsibility of all believers to remember the work of the Lord in prayer and to support it as good stewards with our time, talent, and finances as the Lord has prospered them. We believe in the standard of tithing of income to the church so there will be sufficient funds to support the work that the Lord has given the church to do here on earth. (*Genesis 28:22; Deuteronomy 14:22; Malachi 3:8, 10; 1 Corinthians 16:2*)

We believe that God intends a relationship between one man and one woman for one lifetime. A marriage relationship should not be dissolved for any reason not justified by the teachings of the Word of God. Many times marriages are not compatible and are dissolved. We believe that God can put these broken hearts back together and make of them Christians that are whole and complete through the cleansing blood that was shed on Calvary. We believe that all sin can be forgiven with the exception of sinning against the Holy Spirit. (*Matthew 5:31-32; 12:31; Mark 10:6-9; Romans 7:1-3; 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2*)

We believe that "alternative life styles" including, but not limited to homosexuality, adultery, fornication, etc., is sin and is against every fundamental teaching in the Holy Scriptures. (*Genesis 19:5; Romans 1:18-28; Galatians 5:16-21*)

We believe that the Christian life should exemplify unconditional love for one another as God loves us. (*John 13:34-35; 15:12-14*)

We have taken a very strong pro-life position, believing that the unborn child is a human being whom God is creating. At the point of conception, **we believe** that the child is alive. (*Psalms 51:5; 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:44*)^{*1}

(14) Church Ordinances. We believe that the Lord Jesus instituted the ordinance of baptism and the Lord's Supper to be observed by all believers until His return. (*Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*)

Section 2. Membership Covenant.

I promise to live in dependence upon the grace of the Lord, according to the light given to me by the Holy Spirit through His Holy Word; to attend as diligently as possible the public worship and activities of the church; and, to support the church and the work given to it by the Lord as He enables me to do.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1. Qualifications for Membership.

Persons desiring to unite with this church shall be granted membership upon profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and agreement to the foregoing articles of faith.

Section 2. Receiving Members.

As many as have assented to the qualifications for membership, shall be received into the membership of the church by the Elders (Session) at such time as may be determined by them.

Section 3. Associate Membership.

Applicants for membership, who desire to retain their membership in another evangelical church, may be admitted in membership of this church in the same manner as is prescribed above.

Such members shall possess the same rights and privileges as regular members except they cannot vote in congregational meetings nor can they hold office on any of the official boards.

Section 4. Dismissal of Members.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to examine the membership of the church every six months, and any member who shall have been absent from the services of the church for a period of six months without giving satisfactory reasons for such absence may be put on the inactive roll. Then, at the end of a second six month period, if they are still inactive without giving satisfactory reasons for such absence, they may be removed from the roll of the church at the discretions of the Board of Elders.

If a member is found practicing something contrary to the doctrinal standards of this church or to be living in flagrant sin, that member shall be visited by a committee of the Session regarding the transgression. In such cases, when the conduct of the member is not reconciled and the fellowship restored, the Session may remove such member's name from the roll of the church membership.

ARTICLE IV

The government of this church is vested in its membership, executed through the Session in all spiritual matters.

ELIGIBLE VOTING MEMBERS IN THIS DOCUMENT SHALL BE CONSIDERED AS MEMBERS LISTED ON THE ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP ROLL.

ARTICLE V

Officers

Section 1. The Officers.*5

The officers of this church shall consist of a Board of Elders, a Board of Trustees, and a Church Treasurer. Other officers or committees will be appointed by the Board of Elders.

Section 2. The Duty of the Officers.

It shall be the duty of the ELDERS to care for the church and its spiritual condition to guard the purity of the doctrine and life of the church, and to discipline the church in accordance with the Word of God. The Elders shall assist the Minister in the administration of the Lord's Supper, and act for the church in the reception and dismissal of members. It shall be the duty of the Elders to assist the Minister in counseling the needy, comforting the afflicted, visiting the sick, and supplying the pulpit of the church in the absence of the Minister.

The moderator of the Session (the Board of Elders) shall be one of the members of the Board, but not the Minister.

It shall also be the duty of the Elders to supervise the operation of the church with its various organizations. The Elders shall supervise the Sunday School activities, the

Missionary Work of the Church, the distribution of benevolent funds, the youth work, and any other organization or activity of the body.

It shall be the duty of the CHURCH TREASURER to disburse the funds of the church under the supervision of the Board of Elders, who shall appoint a committee to count the monies prior to depositing. The Treasurer shall verify the deposit at the bank or appoint another responsible person to do so as needed.

Any of the above mentioned officers of the church may be removed from the office for conduct contrary to the Word of God. In addition, any officer, teacher, or employee appointed by the Elders, or whose appointment requires the approval of the Elders, may be removed by the Elders at any time for just cause.

Section 3. Hiring of Minister, Staff/Personnel, and Election of Elders^{*3}

GENERAL PROVISIONS^{*4, *5}

The officers of the church shall be Moderator, the Session, the Board of Trustees, the Treasurer, and other such officers as the Session may from time to time determine. For legal purposes, the Moderator shall serve as President of the corporate entity, and the Treasurer shall serve as Secretary. The same person may not simultaneously hold both positions of President and Secretary.

THE MINISTER

The MINISTER shall be recommended by the Board of Elders. He shall be elected in a convened congregational meeting by two-thirds vote of the eligible membership present. To be eligible to vote, the individual must be on the active membership roll. The election shall be for an indefinite period of time. The Minister shall be subject to a job description.

The Elders shall conduct an annual review of the performance of the Minister to determine the effectiveness of his ministry. Any new minister shall have his first review six (6) months after his employment and the next review within two weeks of his commensurate date.

It shall be the duty of the MINISTER to have general oversight of the spiritual life of the church with the Elders, to preach the word in the regular services of the church and to administer the ordinances. He shall be an ex-officio member of all other boards and committees, and shall have full voice with the other members of the official board of the church, but shall have no voting privilege.^{*5}

If the Minister is asked to resign his pastorate, the church will pay severance at the discretion of the Board of Elders.^{*5}

STAFF/PERSONNEL^{*3}

The employment of any or all Staff/Personnel shall be interviewed, recommended, evaluated, and approved at the discretion of the Board of Elders.^{*3}

THE BOARD OF ELDERS

The nominees for the Board of Elders shall be recommended to the then seated Board of Elders by members of the Congregation. These nominees shall be in the possession of the Elders no later than October 1st. The Elders, in turn, will investigate the recommendations to insure that the individuals meet the requirements of the office. The requirements for the Elders shall be based on the teachings of scripture as presented in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and any other companion scriptures. Those qualifications include, but are not necessarily limited to, three areas: (1) personal character, (2) family relationships, and (3) public testimony. While it is understood that no person in reality possesses a "perfect" personal life, family life, or public testimony, it is understood that those who serve as Elders of West Meade Fellowship should be in pursuit of the highest of spiritual qualities. Such qualities do include a commitment to and faithful support and attendance of the ministries of West Meade Fellowship.^{*3} When all nominees have been investigated and approved, a slate of recommendations will be given to the congregation.^{*1} The nominees shall be elected by the church at the annual congregational meeting for a period not to exceed^{*5} three years on a rotating basis so that the terms of one-third members of the Board shall expire each year.

The present and active Board of Elders, after prayerful consideration, and a thorough investigation regarding the qualification of each nominee, shall present their recommendations to the congregation. Those nominees being recommended shall be presented in the form of a written, biographical format to the members of the congregation. This written biography will be presented to the congregation no later than two weeks prior to the election. At the election, each recommended nominee must receive a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the voting body in order to be duly elected to the Board of Elders.^{*1}

It is understood that at no time shall a husband and wife serve together on the Board of Elders. It is further understood that at no time shall any Minister of the congregation (Pastor, Minister of Music, Minister of Youth, Minister of Children, etc.), nor their wives and/or husbands shall serve on the Board of Elders during their employment.^{*2}

Should the office of Elder become vacant before the expiration of his term of office, his successor may be elected by the same specifications as mentioned above to fill the unexpired term. If a vacancy occurs between the months of January-May, the vacancy will be filled by due process. If a vacancy occurs after May 31st, such vacancy will be filled at the regular time of election of elders.^{*1}

No elder shall be elected to the Board who has just completed three consecutive years. At least one year must elapse before the retiring elder may be reelected. No elder shall serve as moderator for more than 2 consecutive calendar periods.^{*5}

The Board of Elders shall have the right to appoint a property acquisition committee, hereby known as a Long Range Planning Committee. The Board of Elders shall

supervise the actions of this committee and make recommendations if such action is deemed to be in the best interest of the congregation.*1

The Board of Elders shall also have the right to appoint and manage any committees or sub-boards it finds necessary to conduct the affairs of the church.*5

The minimum number of individuals to be appointed to the Board of Elders shall be six (6)*5 and the maximum number shall be fifteen (15).

After the annual congregational meeting and prior to the end of the fiscal year, the elected Elders shall be ordained and/or installed, and the Session shall elect a Moderator and a Clerk who will act as Secretary of the Board for the upcoming year. The Elders' yearly durations shall run from January 1 to December 31.*5

If a member of the Session shall absent himself from three regular meetings per year without reasonable cause, unless after due consideration, the Board of Elders feels there is reason for exception, (such as extended illness), his name shall be removed from the Board and a vacancy shall be deemed to exist.*1

A quorum of the Board shall consist of a two-thirds majority.

Section 4. Purchase, Sale of Real Estate, Contracts, Mortgages and Other Debts*1

It is to be expressly understood that the Board of Elders as representatives of the members of West Meade Fellowship, having been duly elected by and acting for the benefit of West Meade Fellowship, has the sole right to enter into all real estate negotiations, planning, purchasing, selling, mortgages, deeds of trust, or other loan instruments. The duty and power to make any contracts (real or personal) shall be vested in the Board of Elders.

The Board of Elders shall have the authority to appoint, name, or designate an individual or individuals to sign on their behalf notes of debt that have been approved by the Board. All contracts shall be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Elders.

TITLE(S): The Board of Elders hereby designates the Long Range Planning Committee with the right and duty to sign real estate documents and hold title to property for the benefit of West Meade Fellowship.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees shall be composed of three qualified members who are enrolled as active members. The Board of Elders shall appoint them to this office.

Trustees shall serve for a period of five years. Any vacancies shall be filled by the discretion of the Board of Elders. It is to be understood that this office is recognized as being an honorary position in recognition of long time Christian service.*1

THE TREASURER

The office of Treasurer shall be filled by a qualified individual who is enrolled as an active member of the church. The Board of Elders shall appoint him/her to this office.

ARTICLE VI

Congregational Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meeting for Election and Installation of Elders

The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on the first Sunday of November, for the purpose of electing the Board of Elders. The voting of the congregation shall be by secret, written ballot.

Section 2. Quorum

A quorum for the transaction of business in all congregational meetings shall consist of one-third of the members of the church who are eligible to vote. Only members who are on the active roll shall be eligible to vote at any of the business meetings.

In all congregational meetings, the Moderator of the Board of Elders shall preside, and in his absence, a substitute from the Board may be appointed by the Board of Elders.

In the transaction of business in all congregational meetings, *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be used in all cases not covered by this Constitution.

ARTICLE VII

Amendments

This Constitution may be changed or altered, at a duly announced meeting of the congregation, provided the proposed alteration has been conspicuously posted in written form or letter sent to members and announced from the pulpit for a period of two consecutive Sundays preceding said meeting.

The doctrinal statement of this church is fully founded and totally based on the Holy Scriptures and shall so remain. Any change or alteration of the constitution shall require a three-fourths majority vote of eligible members.

ARTICLE VIII

Ordinances

Section 1. Baptism.

Baptism shall be a prerequisite for membership in the church, it being fully understood that the ordinance is not necessary for salvation. This ordinance is simply an outward

sign of an inward spiritual change. The baptism shall be administered with the approval of the Minister and the Board of Elders. The mode of baptism, being only a testimony to a spiritual reality, shall be by sprinkling or immersion at the candidate's option. We shall accept any mode of baptism administered by any other Christian church.

2. Section 2. The Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper shall be administered as frequently as the Elders shall order. Unless unusual circumstances arise, it shall be observed on the first Sunday of each quarter. Anyone who professes Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior shall be invited to participate in the Lord's Supper.

Section 3. Special Business Meetings.

Any regular or called meetings of the congregation may be attained for the transaction of business, provided the announcement of said meeting is given from the pulpit on two Sundays preceding said meeting.

Special meetings of the congregation may be called at any time by the Board of Elders, or upon the written request to the Board of Elders by twenty percent of the members who are eligible to vote.

In all congregational meetings, the Moderator of the Board of Elders shall preside, and in his absence, a substitute from the Board may be appointed by the Board of Elders.

In the transaction of business in all congregational meetings, Robert's Rules of Order shall be used in all cases not covered by this Constitution.

ARTICLE IX

Dedication of Children

It shall be the policy of the church to have children dedicated to the Lord when desired by parents who are members or associate members. The dedication of children shall not be considered an ordinance. Child dedication is a commitment to the Lord, on the part of the parent(s), to raise the child to the best of their ability in a Christian atmosphere and to the best of their ability teach them the way of the Lord. The church does not in any way believe that this dedication has anything to do with the salvation of the child. When the child reaches the age of accountability (the time in the child's life when they are mature enough to know right from wrong and have to make a conscious decision), it will be their own decision as to their accepting or rejecting the calling of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into life eternal. CHILD DEDICATION IS NOT A MODE OF SALVATION AND SHALL NOT BE CONSIDERED BAPTISM.

ARTICLE X

The Budget

The fiscal year of the church shall end on the thirty-first day of December each year. Therefore, the budget for the following year shall be completed and approved prior to December thirty-first.

ARTICLE XI

Dissolution

The term for which the church is to exist is perpetual, but, in the event of dissolution of said church, any proceeds or funds on hand shall be distributed or used in accordance with the purposes for which said church is created, and under no circumstances shall any of the proceeds or net assets of the church be used to the benefit of any individual.

Special Note

When an asterisk (*) appears, followed by a number, it indicates an amendment has been made.

The asterisk and number 1 (^{*1}) indicates amendments were made at a regularly scheduled Annual Congregation Meeting on Sunday, November 17, 1996.

The asterisk and number 2 (^{*2}) indicates amendments were made at a regularly scheduled Town Meeting on Sunday, July 10, 1999.

The asterisk and number 3 (^{*3}) indicates amendments were made at a regularly scheduled Annual Congregation Meeting on Sunday, November 7, 1999.

The asterisk and number 4 (^{*4}) indicates action taken by the Board of Elders at a regularly scheduled Annual Congregation Meeting, Monday, November 20, 2000.

The asterisk and number 5 (^{*5}) indicates action taken by the Congregation at the regularly scheduled Annual Congregation Meeting, Sunday, November 11, 2007.