

White Sulphur Baptist Church Constitution & By-Laws



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONSTITUTION

BY-LAWS

1. MEMBERSHIP

**GENERAL
CANDIDACY
TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

2. CHURCH OFFICERS

**PASTOR
MINISTERIAL STAFF
CHURCH CLERK
DEACONS
MODERATOR
SUNDAY SCHOOL DIRECTOR
TREASURER
TRUSTEES**

3. CHURCH POLICIES

4. CHURCH ORDINANCES

**BAPTISM
LORD'S SUPPER**

5. CHURCH FINANCES

6. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

7. BUSINESS MEETINGS

8. CHURCH COMMITTEES

**CHURCH COUNCIL
FINANCE & BUDGET
HOUSE & GROUNDS
NOMINATING
PERSONNEL**

CONSTITUTION OF WHITE SULPHUR BAPTIST CHURCH

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this Constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and so that this body may be governed in an orderly manner. This Constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches of the same faith.

I. NAME

This body shall be known as the White Sulphur Baptist Church of Georgetown, Kentucky.

II. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963 and the year 2000 amendment thereto. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the Church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

III. CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and 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 engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and to abstain from the sale of, and the use of, intoxicating drinks as a beverage, to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and the spread of pornography; and be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We, moreover, engage that when 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.

IV. CHARACTER

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

WHITE SULPHUR BAPTIST CHURCH BY-LAWS

I. MEMBERSHIP

GENERAL

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

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church and conditions of such membership.

CANDIDACY

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership of this Church. All candidates for membership are expected to endorse the Church's Statement of Faith, and to have had a personal saving experience with the Lord Jesus Christ. All candidates may present themselves to the Church for membership at any regular worship service in any of the following ways:

- By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this Church.
- By promise of letter from another Baptist Church.
- By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist Church when no letter is obtainable.
- From churches of other denominations upon the candidate's testimony of a genuine conversion experience and submission to New Testament baptism.

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be terminated by:

- Death
- Granting of letter to a sister Baptist Church
- Erasure upon becoming affiliated with a church of another faith or denomination.
- Exclusion by action of this Church *

*Exclusion shall be for a good cause by the vote of three fourths majority or more of those members present and voting at a regular business meeting with due notice having been given at the immediately preceding business meeting. (Matthew 18: 15-17)

II. CHURCH OFFICERS

All Church officers must be members of this Church. The officers of this Church shall be as follows:

Pastor, Ministerial Staff, Clerk, Deacons, Moderator, Sunday School Director, Treasurer, Trustees.

PASTOR

The Pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament Church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the Church staff to perform their tasks.

The Pastor is the leader of pastoral ministries in a church. As such he works with the deacons and church staff to:

- lead the church in performing its tasks
- lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and application of biblical principles
- proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers
- care for the church's members and other persons in the community

A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

A Pulpit Committee shall be elected by the Church upon recommendation by the Nominating Committee to seek out a suitable Pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one name at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot, with an affirmative vote of three fourths of those members present being necessary for a choice. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the Church's request. The Pastor shall give at least two weeks notice at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities as Pastor. If the Church terminates the pastor, the pastor will be provided with two weeks of salary.

MINISTERIAL STAFF

The Church shall employ such staff members as the Church shall need. A job description including salary and benefits shall be written by the Personnel Committee when the need for a staff member is determined.

The Personnel Committee working in conjunction with the appropriate committee (i.e. music, youth) shall prayerful search for a suitable candidate to fill such positions. The Personnel Committee shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one name at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot, with an affirmative vote of three fourths of those members present being necessary for a choice. The staff member thus elected shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the Church's request. The staff member shall give at least two weeks notice at the time of resignation before terminating responsibilities.

The staff member will:

- perform the usual duties pertaining to the staff assignments
- cooperate with and assist the pastor as needed

- support and not interfere with the spiritual leadership of the pastor
- be subject to the will and pleasure of the pastor and congregation.

CHURCH CLERK

The Church shall elect a Clerk annually. All Church records are the property of the church and should be filed in the Church office.

The Clerk shall:

- keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the Church, except as otherwise herein provided
- keep a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, transfer, or death, together with a record of baptisms
- issue letters of transfers voted by the Church
- preserve on file official Church communications and reports
- give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary and indicated in these By-Laws.

DEACONS

Guidelines for the Deacons:

A Deacon shall:

- be exemplary in his spiritual walk, in witnessing, and in stewardship throughout the Church (Acts 6: 1-7 and I Timothy 3: 8-13)
- support and not interfere with the spiritual leadership of the Pastor

Responsibilities of the Deacons shall be to:

- cooperate with and assist the Pastor in the promotion of all interests of the Church
- counsel, aid, and assist the Church and its Pastor, and be servants of the Church
- assist the Pastor with observing the ordinances
- elect a chairman

Manner of selection of Deacons:

- The deacons shall be selected by the Church.
- The Church shall set the number of Deacons serving on the active deacon board.
- The Nominating Committee, upon recommendation of the Deacons, will appoint a Deacon selection committee consisting of two active Deacons and three members at large.
- The Deacon selection committee shall review eligible men of the Church using the guidelines found in I Timothy 3: 8-13 and Acts 6: 1-7. They shall select qualified men and present those names to the Deacons for examination.
- All nominees are to be male and have been members of this Church for a minimum of one (2) years.
- Upon successful examination, those men will be presented to the Church for vote.

Tenure of office

Deacons selected to serve on the active deacon board will serve until removed from office:

- by action of the Church, or
- by resignation from the active deacon board, or
- by their request to become inactive.

MODERATOR

The Moderator shall be elected by the church annually. An assistant Moderator shall be elected when the Moderator is absent. The Church Clerk shall call the church to order and an acting Assistant Moderator shall be elected.

SUNDAY SCHOOL DIRECTOR

The Sunday School Director is responsible for determining the Sunday School organization needed to reach and teach effectively.

The Sunday School Director shall be elected annually upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee and shall become part of that committee to give direction to the enlistment of workers for the Sunday School.

The duties of the Sunday School Director shall be to:

- give specific assistance to each department director in accomplishing his/her task
- help in leading all workers to become effective witnesses to lost persons
- develop and support the outreach program of the Sunday School
- determine training needs of the workers and develop a comprehensive training plan
- lead workers in setting challenging but reachable goals
- give direction to the selection and proper use of all curriculum materials
- determine financial and physical resources needed for the Sunday School and recommend these needs to the church
- maintain and use records for the Sunday School
- report periodically to the church on the progress of the Sunday School
- lead in evaluating the work of the Sunday School.

TREASURER

The Church shall elect a Church Treasurer annually. The Treasurer's report shall be audited annually by the Finance and Budget Committee or a public accountant. The Treasurer shall be bonded.

The duties of the Treasurer shall be to:

- receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the Church
- keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements

- render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month.

TRUSTEES

The Church shall elect five (5) members each year to serve as Trustees. The Nominating Committee, when nominating Trustees shall designate the Chairperson.

The Trustees shall, as provided by law and action of the Church:

- hold in trust the title to all property of the Church
- represent the Church in all matters of legal responsibility regarding the purchase and disposal of Church property
- file copies of all contracts entered into by the trustees on behalf of the Church with the Church Clerk
- execute all legal papers relating to the Church as the Church may direct
- procure proper insurance for all property and functions of the Church
- arrange for all legal papers and documents to be kept in a safety deposit box (insurance policies excepted, which the Treasurer or other designated person may hold) rented in the name of “White Sulphur Baptist Church, Georgetown, Kentucky.” The Treasurer and the Chairperson of the Trustees shall have access to the safety deposit box
- arrange to check the inventory against the contents of the safety deposit box at the first meeting of the Trustees. This inventory should be signed by the Chairperson of the Trustees, and copies distributed to the Church Clerk, Church Treasurer, and the Chairperson of the Trustees
- file all correspondence entered into by the Trustees, and transfer this file from one Chairperson to another, together with the inventory of contents of the safety deposit box
- have NO power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the Church without the specific vote of the Church authorizing such action. The Church membership shall be notified by letter thirty (30) days in advance when the sale or disposition of real estate property is contemplated
- have NO any control over the use of Church property except by vote of the Church.

III. CHURCH POLICIES

- The organizational Church year shall begin September 1st and end on August 31st the following year, coinciding with the Association’s year. The fiscal year shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.
- No person shall be elected to any position without first being contacted and having consented to serve.
- The use of Church property shall be limited to Church-related activities of a local, state, or national scope. All exceptions to this policy shall be with the approval of the appropriate committee and the Church, if applicable.

IV. ORDINANCES

BAPTISM

This Church shall receive for Baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

- Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- The Pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer Baptism.
- Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church.
- A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the Pastor.

LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper in unity and fellowship with his disciples. We feel that anyone who professes Christ as Savior and has been baptized should be allowed to partake of this ordinance.

- The Lord's Supper shall be observed on a regular basis.
- The Pastor and Deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.

V. CHURCH FINANCE

- A budget shall be made available for review to the Church by the Finance and Budget Committee two (2) weeks before its adoption at the regular business meeting in December.
- All Church organizations participating in the Church budget shall make their request to the Finance and Budget Committee.
- Before any expenditure which is not included in the adopted budget is authorized by the Church, it shall be submitted to the Finance and Budget Committee and a plan for payment consistent with the financial setup of the Church be outlined.
- The Church shall participate in the Cooperative Program on a percentage (%) basis, and this percentage shall be determined annually by the Church. It shall be the policy of this Church to participate in all agencies of the Cooperative Program.

The Finance and Budget Committee shall be empowered to do the following:

- Without vote of the Church, grant up to, but not more than, a ten percent (10%) overage to any one item in the budget (missions, salaries, and contingent fund not included), provided that the Finance and Budget Committee can reduce some other items by the same amount.
- If, because of reduced income during the year, the Finance and Budget Committee finds it necessary to reduce the overall budget, it may, without vote of the Church, reduce all budgeted items enough to meet the reduced income (missions and salaries not included).

VI. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

- Changes in the Constitution and By-Laws may be made at any regular business meeting, provided that each change has been presented in writing at a previous business meeting.
- Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws shall be by three fourths (3/4) vote of members present.

VII. BUSINESS MEETINGS

- A Regular Business Meeting shall be held monthly on the second Wednesday night of the month.
- A Special Business Meeting may be held to consider special matters of significant nature; however, a one-week notice of this special meeting must be given to the Church body. In extreme urgency, an effort should be made to notify as many members as possible of the time and nature of the meeting.
- The Quorum consists of no less than 15 Church members who attend a business meeting or a properly called special Business Meeting.
- “Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised” is the authority for rules and procedures for all Business Meetings.

VIII. CHURCH COMMITTEES

The Committees of White Sulphur Baptist Church are divided into two categories: Primary and Secondary. The Primary Committees are defined as those committees that are essential to the operation of the Church and shall be in place at all times. All other committees, both standing and ad hoc, are considered to be Secondary and may be created or abolished by the Nominating Committee as necessary, with the approval of the Church. At the beginning of each church year, the nominating committee shall, in a separate document, publish a complete list of committees and make the list available to members of the church.

- The duties and composition of all committees shall be established by the Nominating Committee with approval of the Church.
- All Committees of White Sulphur Baptist Church shall serve at the discretion of and be responsible to the membership.
- Committee members shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Church membership. Committee members shall serve for a period of one to two years as requested by the nominating committee. A Chairperson shall be appointed from within each Committee.
- The Pastor shall be a non-voting member-at-large of each Committee.
- Recommendations from the Committees shall be presented to the Church at regular or Special-called Business Meetings.

PRIMARY COMMITTEES

1. Church Council
2. Finance & Budget Committee
3. House & Grounds Committee
4. Nominating Committee
5. Personnel Committee

PRIMARY COMMITTEE MAKE-UP AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Church Council

The Church Council shall be composed of:

- Pastor as the Chairman
- Sunday School Director
- Chairman of Deacons
- Church Clerk
- Other committee chairpersons as deemed necessary by the pastor with approval of the church.

The Church Council responsibilities are to:

- recommend Church objectives and goals
- formulate and recommend strategies for reaching goals
- outline a calendar of activities so that the total Church work may be correlated
- refer all matters agreed upon by the Council to the Church to be voted upon

Finance and Budget Committee

Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall serve as ex-officio members.

The Finance and Budget Committee's responsibilities are to:

- obtain estimated budgets from all Church committees and the Pastor
- prepare and submitting to the Church annually a budget for its approval at a Business Meeting.
- initiate the annual audit of the Treasurer's books by appointing an Audit Committee.
- meet regularly with the Treasurer and keep itself thoroughly informed as to the status of Church finances and the budget.
- advise the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, when needed, as to how best to deal with all receipts and disbursements.
- advise the Church of times of special need, which may include suggestions for stewardship emphasis and Christmas offering goal and dispersal.
- order envelopes for the new year
- secure envelopes for each current member, as well as all new members when they unite with the Church or Sunday School.

- care for the envelope records, including quarterly report (currently performed by the Assistant Treasurer)
- prepare and send a statement of stewardship to all members, quarterly, semi-annually or annually.

House and Grounds Committee

This committee is not expected to do all the work, but rather encourage, enlist, and share in the work to be done by all members.

The House and Grounds Committee responsibilities are to:

- oversee the maintenance and repair of the Church facilities and property
- make periodic recommendations to the Church when the building, furnishings, equipment, etc. need attention
- supervise occasional “work days” for outside and inside upkeep.

Nominating Committee

Each year this Committee is recommended to the Church by the Pastor. Once the Sunday School Director is elected by the Church, he/she becomes an ex-officio member of this Committee. At the first meeting of the Committee, a Chairperson and a recording secretary should be elected. Their work should begin with enough time to present nominations by the August Business Meeting. The work of this Committee continues throughout the year as changes, additions, etc. are needed.

The Nominating Committee responsibilities are to:

- bring nominations to the Church for all elected Church Officers, Committees, and Sunday School positions
- recommend to the church the creation of any new committee and/or offices deemed advisable to effectively carry on the work of the Church
- supply all committees, leaders, teachers, and officers with outline of duties and purpose.
- encourage committees to call the first meeting each year to elect officers and set agenda for the year.
- publish and make available to the membership a complete list of committees and leaders at the beginning of each church year.

In selecting persons to fill vacancies, these things should be considered:

- The person selected must be a member and attend Church on a regular basis
- The committee must be in agreement (fully) on the person selected
- The selected person must be contacted and accept the position(s) before being recommended to the Church.

Personnel Committee

This committee shall consist of not more than five (5) members.

The Personnel Committee responsibilities are to:

- assess the need for additional Ministerial Staff and propose this position to the Nominating Committee for further action
- recommend all non-ministerial employees for employment
- create job descriptions and salary and benefits packages which are to be approved by the Finance and Budget Committee in light of the status of the Church budget
- upon approval of the Church, enter into written agreement with the person being employed, the agreement to state the salary, vacations, holidays, etc. and a signed copy of the agreement to be kept in the personnel file in the Church office
- have authority to retain or terminate the services of all persons employed by the Church (Ministerial staff excluded) without the vote of the Church.

It is understood that all Ministerial Staff of the Church shall be responsible to the Pastor, who in turn is responsible to the Church for the work and conduct of all persons employed by the Church.