



WESLEY CHAPEL

Church Constitution

2018 Edition

Vincent A. Artese
Lead Pastor

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Associate Pastor

Article I. Name

The name of this church shall be Wesley Chapel.

Article II. Mission Statement

Wesley Chapel is a *Doctrinal, Missional, Gospel Community*. We are Doctrinal because we emphasize the importance of right doctrine in our teaching, discipleship, preaching, and daily lives. We are Missional because we emphasize a contextual engagement with our world in order to lead others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. We are a Gospel Community because we are a fellowship that has joined together for the purpose of mutual edification, encouragement, love, and accountability.

Article III. Affiliations

Wesley Chapel is a member of The International Fellowship of Bible Churches, a voluntary fellowship of churches who share common goals and purposes within the church of Christ universal.

Article IV. Nonprofit Status

Wesley Chapel is a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the state of Connecticut. Federal tax exemption is granted under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) through the International Fellowship of Bible Churches.

Article V. Purpose

Wesley Chapel exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities.

More particularly, but without limitation, the purposes of Wesley Chapel are to:

- a) Encourage and promote the advancing of the gospel of Jesus Christ
- b) Establish and maintain the worship of God
- c) Provide a basis of relationship and community among fellow believers
- d) Encourage and promote the spiritual growth and discipleship of believers
- e) Respond to human need with ministries of service and compassion
- f) Own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, and otherwise acquire or dispose of such property (real or chattel) as may be needed for accomplishing the mission of the church

Article VI. Meetings

6.1 Public Worship

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

6.2 Church Business Meetings

The Elders shall have the authority to call a Church business meeting or special meetings as needed.

Article VII. Statement of Faith

Wesley Chapel is an evangelical church in the historic Wesleyan-Arminian tradition. We therefore hold to the Three Ecumenical Creeds of the Ancient Church: the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. We also hold to the Five Articles of Remonstrance (1610) and the Twenty-Five Articles of Religion (1784).

In addition we hold to the following faith statement of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches:

7.1 Revelation of God

We believe God exists and has sufficiently revealed himself. There is a general consciousness of God among all people through creation and conscience. He spoke through the prophets and apostles and finally revealed himself through His Son. The Holy Scriptures are the record of His disclosure, as well as the record of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Eccl 3:11; Psalm 19:1-4; John 1:9; Acts 14:17; Rom 1:23-25; Heb 1:2

7.2 Authority of Scripture

We believe the Bible was fully inspired by God, given without error, and is our final authority for faith and practice. God superintended the human authors so that what they composed and recorded are an accurate reflection of His revelation of truth. The authority of Scripture is based upon the fact that the Scriptures are the Word of God.

Psalm 12:6; 18:30; 19:7; 119:140; Prov 30:5; Matt 5:18; John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21

7.3 Sufficiency of Scripture

When the Scriptures are accurately understood, interpreted and applied, with the illumination of the Holy Spirit, as well as careful study and discernment, they are completely sufficient for the believer's direction in Christian living. The Bible is of such complete sufficiency that whatever is not contained in its pages is not to be considered essential to the faith or practice of any believer.

1 Cor 2:10-14; Jude 3; Rev 22:18-19

7.4 The Trinity

We believe the Bible teaches that there is one God, who exists as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God has always existed and is the creator of all things. He is self-existent, infinite, eternal, and unchanging. He is sovereign, everywhere present, all knowing, almighty, and absolutely perfect. He is the source of all truth, love, goodness, grace, and holiness.

Gen 1:26; 3:22; 11:5-7; Deut 6:4; Isa 6:3; Matt 2:16-17; 28:19; John 14: 16-17; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 12:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 3:18; 5:4-7

7.5 Deity and Humanity of Christ

We believe the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ, who was eternally one with the Father, entered this world in a human body. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He was fully God and fully man. He lived a sinless life, died on the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven where he sits at the right hand of the Father. Thus, His kingdom has been established.

Matt 1:23; 3:3; 4:2; Luke 2:52; John 1:1; 4:6 8:58; 19:28; Acts 10:36; Rom 9:5; 10:13; 1 Tim 2:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8; 2:14-18; 4:15-16; 1 John 5:20; Rev 1:8

7.6 The Holy Spirit

We believe the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. We emphasize that the Holy Spirit is a person, not merely a power. He convicts the world of sin. He brings spiritual life and assurance to believers. He produces the fruit of salvation in our lives and gives spiritual gifts to build up the Church. However, since the Spirit divides the gifts according to His will, no single gift can be required for all believers. The true evidence of the Holy Spirit in one's life is holy living.

Ezek 36:26-27; John 3:5-8;16:8-11; Acts 5:3-4; Rom 8:9; 8:16; 12:4-11; Gal 4:6; 5:19-23; Titus 3:5

7.7 Original Sin

We believe the Bible teaches that we are created in God's image, but we have fallen into a state of sin through Adam's original sin. We are corrupt and cannot save ourselves. Jesus Christ is our only salvation. This salvation comes by God's grace through our faith in the atoning work of Christ as our only sacrifice for sin.

Psalm 51:5; Jer 17:9; Matt 7:11; Rom 3:10-18; 5:12-19; Eph 2:3; 4:22; James 4:1-2; 2 Peter 1:4

7.8 Atonement

We believe the Bible teaches that the atonement of Christ demonstrates the love of God and turns away the wrath of God against our sin. Thus, the atoning work of Christ satisfies the justice of God's law, reconciles us with God, provides for full restoration from the Fall, and gives us victory over Satan. This atonement is universal in provision, but is effectual only for those who believe.

Isa 53:5; Matt 20:28; John 1:29; 3:16; Rom 5:6-8, 17-21; 1 Cor 7:23; 2 Cor 5:14-21; 1 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:11; Heb 2:9; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 2:2

7.9 Grace

We believe the Bible teaches that God makes the first move in bringing this salvation to us. The Gospel call is the drawing of the Spirit. His preliminary grace awakens the sinner and enables us to repent and believe. Yet this grace is not irresistible. We must repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This saving faith is the gift of God given to those who genuinely repent.

John 1:9-13; 6:44; 12:32; 16:8-11; Acts 8:16; 9:4-18; 10:35; 11:18; 13:43; 18:10; 19:3-4; 22:16; 18:24-6; Acts 16:14-16; Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 6:1-2; Eph 2:8; 2 Tim 2:25; Titus 2:11

7.10 Salvation and Security

We believe the Bible teaches we must be born again. The new birth brings forgiveness and regeneration to a new life with freedom from the practice of willful sin. It also brings adoption as a child of God and the life of holiness is begun. As we walk in the Spirit, we have security in Christ. This security of the believer is conditioned upon a maintained obedient faith.

John 3:3-5; 5:25; Rom 5:1; 8:1; 8:15-17; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 4:7; Eph 2:1; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23;

2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:9; 5:1; Ezek 18:24-26; 33:12-18; John 8:31; 15:6; 1 Cor 15:2; 1 Tim 4:1, 15-16; 2 Tim 2:12; Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-29; James 5:19-20; 2 Peter 1:10-11; 2:20-22; Rev 2:11; 3:5.

7.11 The Church

We believe the Bible teaches that at the new birth all believers are adopted into the family of God, which is the body of Christ or the Church. The Church is not a particular denomination, but the entire body of believers in Jesus Christ. It exists wherever faithful believers congregate, the Word of God is proclaimed, and the sacraments are administered. The Church exists to glorify God through worship, evangelism, discipleship, service, fellowship, social responsibility, and through expanding the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world. The Bible teaches that

we should observe the sacraments of baptism and communion, as outward and visible signs of God's inward grace.

Matt 5:13-16; 6:10; 28:19; John 4:23; 17:21; Acts 2:42, 47; Rom 14:19; 1 Cor 3:10-11; 11:2, 24-26; Eph 3:4- 6; 4:4, 16; Heb 10:24-25

7.12 Sanctification

We believe the Bible teaches that obedient believers will become increasingly convicted of the nature of sin still remaining in them. As they walk in the Spirit, they will be led to a full cleansing from the inner nature of sin and filled with a holy love toward God and our neighbor through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. We believe the Bible promises this perfecting grace, which is also called entire sanctification or Christian perfection. Entire sanctification is commanded, prayed for, and exemplified in the New Testament. Sanctification is provided for by the atoning work of Jesus Christ through the presence of the Holy Spirit. This sanctification, resulting in Christian perfection, implies neither the end of growth or progress, nor absolute perfection. It is a relative perfection in which God imparts holiness and imputes perfection to those who are governed by and who continue to develop in His holy love. Whether in a single crisis moment, or through gentler steps over a longer period of time, all believers are exhorted to press forward and not stop short of the fullness of this blessing.

Deut 30:6; Psalm 130:8; Ezekiel 36:25; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 John 3:8; Eph. 5:25-27; Rom 8:3-4; Matt 5:48; 22:37; 1 Peter 1:16 ; Phil 3:15; 1 John 4:17 ; Matt 6:13; John 17:20-23; 2 Cor 13:9, 11; Eph 3:14- 21; Phil 1:4-6, 9-11; Col 4:12; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 13:20-1; 1 Peter 5:10-11

7.13 Last Things

We believe that the kingdom of Christ was established at the time of Christ's first advent and that he will cause His kingdom to so come to earth that His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. While no man knows the day or the hour of His return, we believe that Christ will return a second time to catch away the Church, to raise all who are dead, and to judge the whole world. He will be revealed in His glory, bring the work of salvation to completion, overthrow the world system, and establish a new heaven and earth. There is an eternal heaven to gain and an eternal hell to avoid.

Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27; 17:20-21; John 16:16; Matt 6:10; Psalm 22:27-31; 72; 86:9; 110:1; Isa 2:2-4; 9:6-7; 11:6-9; 25:7-8; 66:23; Jer 31:34; Ezek 47:1-12; Micah 4:1-5; Hab 2:14; Matt 24:36; 1 Thess 4:16-18; Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29; 1 Cor 15:42-44; Rev 20:12-13 ; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor 4:5; Rev 22:12; Rom 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Thess 2:8; Heb 9:28; John 14:2-3; 1 John 3:2; Rev 7:14-17; 22:3; Matt 8:12; 25:30-46; Mark 9:42-48; Luke 16:19-31; 2 Thess 1:7-10; Rev 14:10; 20:10

7.14 Gender and Sexuality

On issues of gender and sexuality Wesley Chapel holds to both the Danvers Statement (1987) and the Nashville Statement (2017).

It is the biblical position that marriage involves the union of one man and one woman in permanent sacred fidelity. Though various cultures and customs have evolving definitions of marriage, it is God alone who has ultimate authority to prescribe and describe the marital relationship (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:1-9; Mark 10:1-12).

Furthermore, sexual intimacy is only properly exercised and pursued within the confines of this marital relationship. Sexual immorality, defined as any sexual activity outside of the boundaries of the sacred marital relationship between one man and one woman, is clearly and expressly prohibited by the Lord (Matthew 15:19; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4).

As a consequence, the Church regards any and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or even lustful intent toward such, as sinful and ultimately unsatisfying. Moreover, the Church also regards as sinful the intent or desire to surgically alter one's biological sex to a different sex. Since the body is a creation of God, the Church holds sexual identity to be biologically determined, and associated gender norms are to be observed as appropriate to biblical standards. Disagreement with one's biological sex only leads to spiritual confusion and emotional chaos (Genesis 1:27; Romans 1:26-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

In order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical example to the Church Members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity or united to the Church in membership should abide by and agree to this §7.14, "Statement on Marriage and Sexuality" and conduct themselves accordingly.

Though sinful sexual expression is egregious (as is all sin), the gospel provides redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 3:3-7).

Furthermore, there is a difference between temptation and un-repentant sin. Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are; yet He never sinned. Members, employees, volunteers and attendees of the Church wrestling with all manner of sexual temptation will find a Church ready to point them to Jesus and join with them to fight for their obedience to Christ. Jesus called the weary and heavy-laden to Himself. As a church desiring to follow Christ fully, the Church will be a safe place for men and women fighting sexual temptations of all kinds. For those fighting temptation and repenting of sin, the Church will provide love, care and

direction (Matthew 11:28-30; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 2:17-18; Hebrews 4:14-16).

The Church's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality does not provide grounds for bigotry, bullying or hate, as we fully believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity, regardless of his or her lifestyle. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated as sinful and are neither in accordance with the Scriptures nor the doctrines of the Church.

This §7.14 specifically gives the Elders the right and authority to prohibit acts or omissions, including but not limited to (a) permitting any Church assets or property, whether real property, personal property, intangible property, or any property or asset of any kind that is subject to the direction or control of the Church, to be used in any manner that would be—or, in the sole determination of the Elders, could be perceived by any person to be— inconsistent with this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality; and (b) permitting any Church facilities to be used by any person, organization, corporation, or group that would or might use such facilities to convey, intentionally or by implication, what might be perceived as a favorable impression about any definition of marriage other than that contained in this Section.

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, Wesley Chapel will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the Elders and staff of Wesley Chapel shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of Wesley Chapel shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

The Church's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality is based upon God's will for human life as conveyed to us through the Scriptures, upon which this Church has been founded and anchored, and this §7.14 shall not be subject to change through popular vote; referendum; prevailing opinion of Members or the general public; influence of or interpretation by any government authority, agency, or official action; or legal developments on the local, state, or federal level.

7.15 The Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Psalm 139.)

7.16 Final Authority

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Wesley Chapel's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elders are Wesley Chapel's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Article VIII. Membership

8.1 Requirements

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, as evidence of his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the **Church Covenant**.

The Elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the Elders deem appropriate. In addition, Members shall have completed all of the requirements of membership as defined by the Elders; and Members shall have signed the Church Membership Covenant, as it is revised, amended or restated from time to time, thus committing themselves to the responsibilities therein assigned.

8.2 Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the Elders for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

8.3 Duties and Privileges of Members

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.

Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the Elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

It is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on such matters as may be submitted to a vote by the Elders.

8.4 Responsibilities

Membership within a local church carries both privileges and responsibilities. Members of the Church are held accountable to the responsibilities of general Christian obligations comprehensively though not exhaustively outlined within the Church's Membership Covenant. These responsibilities include praying for and pursuing both corporate health and individual holiness.

In signing the Membership Covenant, Members attest that they have completed the membership process as instructed, read the Membership Covenant, and are willingly covenanting:

- ❖ To hold to the aforementioned Wesley Chapel Statement of Faith (Article VII)
- ❖ To submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21).
- ❖ To pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship and practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Eph. 5:1-21; 1 Thess. 5:12-22).
- ❖ That I have followed the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church:
 - By consciously choosing to be baptized as an outward sign of the inward grace granted to me and my death to sin and newness of life in Christ (Rom. 6)
 - By regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through communion (1 Cor. 11:23-32)
- ❖ To regularly participate in the life of Wesley Chapel by attending weekly services, engaging in gospel-centered community and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
- ❖ To steward the resources God has given me, including time, talents, spiritual gifts and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful and voluntary (Matt. 25:14-30; Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).
- ❖ By God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk in holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:13-16, 4:1-3). Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit.
- ❖ Below are a few examples of actions addressed in the Scriptures:
 - I will practice complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Complete chastity and fidelity means, among other things, that regardless of my marital status, I will pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, premarital sex and pornography (Rom. 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; 10:8; Eph. 5:3; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).
 - I will seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation at Wesley Chapel

- before pursuing divorce from my spouse (Matt. 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10-11).
- I will refrain from illegal drug use, the use of recreational marijuana, drunkenness, gossip and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (Rom. 1:28-32; 13:13; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:18; James 3:3-18).
 - ❖ To take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom by not hastily judging one another in areas where the Scriptures are silent and also in resolving to not willfully put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way in the practice of Christian freedom (Romans 14; 1 Cor. 8:1-13)
 - ❖ To adhere to a biblical and complementarian understanding of the roles of men and women in church, ministry, and family life (Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Tim. 2:12-15)
 - ❖ To do the following when I sin:
 - Confess my sin to God (1 John 1:9) and to fellow believers (James 5:16).
 - Repent and seek help to put my sin to death (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5; 1 John 1:6-10).
 - ❖ To submit to the Elders of the church and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5).
 - ❖ To believe Church discipline is for the good of the Church because it aims to *expose* sin, it aims to *warn*, it aims to *save*, it aims to *protect*, and it aims to *present a good witness* for Jesus Christ to believers and the world
 - ❖ To submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by:
 - Receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached biblically by the Elders (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 5:11; Titus 3:10; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; 2 John 9-10; Heb. 12:5-11).
 - Following the biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another—the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration (James 5:19-20).
 - ❖ To do the following should I leave the church for righteous reasons:
 - To notify the Elders and discuss my reasons for choosing to do so with them in an open and honest manner
 - To seek another church with which I can carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer.

8.5 Voting by Members

The Members of the Church shall vote on matters such as (a) significant matters of church budget as determined by Elders; (b) any loan that results in cumulative indebtedness; (c) merger or dissolution of the Church; (d) any proposed change to these Bylaws¹ that would reduce, revoke or otherwise attenuate a right granted

¹ The terms Bylaws and Constitution will be used interchangeably throughout this document

to the Members in the then-current Bylaws; and (e) any other actions deemed major and extraordinary by the Elders.

The time, place and nature of upcoming votes will be communicated to the Church at least fourteen (14) days in advance and Church Members shall have an opportunity to submit questions, comments and concerns, which will be considered by the Elders on a case-by-case basis. Voting shall take place during public worship services or a special business meeting as determined in the sole discretion of the Elders. Only Church Members shall be permitted to vote on any matter. A simple majority, defined as a result greater than 50% when the number of affirmative votes are divided by the number of total votes cast, shall constitute a passing vote. Voting results shall be communicated to Church Members not later than thirty (30) days following such vote.

8.6 Membership Renewals and Removal

Membership is reviewed and renewed on a periodic basis. Members can be removed through (a) voluntary resignation of membership by one in good standing, (b) death, or (c) a decision by the Elders as a result of the disciplinary process. Members are prohibited from voluntarily resigning their membership while subject to the formal disciplinary process.

Article IX. Authority and Government

Wesley Chapel is first and foremost an ecclesiastical body of believers, with Christ as its head. Christ delegates his authority to Elders in each local church; they care for his church and are accountable to him for the use or abuse of their authority.

The Bible is the supreme governing document. The Bible is the final authority for all questions of theology and ethics, including (but not limited to) sexual identity and sexual practice. The Elders of the church have the final authority for the interpretation of the pertinent biblical texts on the aforementioned topics.

Wesley Chapel is secondarily a civil corporation, the governance of which is established by this Constitution (Bylaws). The Constitution, however, is subject to the Bible and must be interpreted in light of the Scriptures. The Constitution establishes the ecclesiastical bodies that govern Wesley Chapel. The form of government for this church shall be Elder-led and congregational affirmation.

Wesley Chapel is led by a group of Elders who serve in covenant relationship with one another. There will be a Lead Pastor-Elder who serves as the “first among equals” along with an Associate Pastor who serves beside him. The rest of the Pastor-Elder team will be drawn from other male members of the congregation. They may include additional Associate Pastors, bivocational Pastor-Elders, and Lay Elders. This model best fits the biblical teaching on governance (Acts 14:23, 20:28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-19; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

Article X. Church Discipline

Church discipline is a necessary mark of a healthy church. Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the Elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example of scripture.

In accordance with the biblical pattern generally outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, a person who evidences such sin will be confronted in an initial one-on-one meeting, followed by escalating engagement by the Elders. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Where the steps of discipline are exhausted in cases of unrepentant and/or habitual sin, the Elders will consider removing a person from membership with the hope of eventual reconciliation and restoration. This removal may or may not include a prohibition to attend Church services and events, depending on the circumstances. In addition, it might include public disclosure of removal from membership and the circumstances leading to this decision to the corporate membership of the Church. Those so disciplined will in turn be restored to fellowship where the Elders have determined that appropriate repentance has occurred.

Church discipline can include admonition by the Elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14–15; 1 Timothy 5: 19– 20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4–5; Hebrews 12: 1–11; Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5; Matthew 7: 26–27; 18: 15–17; Luke 17: 3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5; Galatians 6: 1–5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14–15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1: 13–14; James 1: 22);

For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24– 25);

For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);

For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28: 7; Matthew 5: 13-16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1-14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10); and

Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2: 24; 15: 5-6; II Corinthians 6: 14-7: 1; Ephesians 1: 4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).

Article XI. Church Leadership

11.1 Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are Elders and Deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

11.2 Board of Elders

Wesley Chapel is governed by a Board of Elders, which shall have the power to determine all issues regarding the Church, having all rights, powers and responsibilities to do so. The minimum number of Elders shall be a plurality of two. There is no maximum number.

Article XII. Elders

12.1 Qualification, Selections, and Service of Elders

To be considered as an Elder, a man must have been called by God into leadership at Wesley Chapel (Acts 20:28), exhibit the highest Christian character, demonstrate the requisite competencies of pastor ministry, and display unity with the other Elders, according to the qualifications of Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Only men are permitted to fulfill the position of Elder as is clearly stated in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 2:12).

Calling: an Elder possesses a godly ambition to serve in the office of Elder. This aspiration comes from the Holy Spirit, who establishes leaders in the church (Acts 20:28). The Elders and members of Wesley Chapel must confirm this internal sense of divine calling.

Character: an Elder exhibits the character qualities as detailed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. These qualities include being above reproach, a mature Christian, a good husband (if married) and a good father (if he has children), temperate, self-controlled, without addictions, respectable and respected by others, and gentle and kind rather than contentious. While still needing to repent of sin when

his life does not manifest these qualities, an Elder must exhibit these characteristics in increasing measure.

Competencies: an Elder demonstrates the requisite competencies for this office, including the ability to teach (cherishes should doctrine for himself, is able to communicate sound doctrine to others, and is able to refute false doctrine), lead (carry out governing responsibilities), pray (for all church matters), and shepherd (exercise church discipline, protect the members, and provide examples of faithfulness and obedience for members to follow).

Chemistry: an Elder displays good chemistry with his fellow Elders so that they are united in theological vision, core values, philosophy of ministry, and brotherhood.

Elders must whole-heartedly affirm the Statement of Faith, Constitution, and other important documents of Wesley Chapel. They must notify the Board of Elders if they take “exception” to anything in these documents, and the board will determine if their exceptions are disqualifying.

12.2 Elder Selection

To be selected as an Elder, the following process is generally followed: assessment of calling, character, competencies, and chemistry; successful completion of an Elder-in-training process; approval by the Board of Elders; affirmation by the members; and installation as an Elder. In the case of hiring an Elder from outside of Wesley Chapel, the investigation, interviews, and due diligence carried out by the Elders doing the hiring constitutes the above process. Upon his hiring, he is installed as an Elder.

The Elders shall have the sole authority to appoint new Elders in conjunction with the affirmation of the congregation after he has been tested and proven to meet the qualifications (stated in §12.1 above).

A man shall be appointed as an Elder by a passing vote of the Elders accompanied by the affirmation of the congregation. The vote of the Elders must be according to the stipulations defined in §12.6 below. A closed member meeting will precede the vote of the Elders. In this meeting members of the congregation will be inquired as to whether they have any concerns about the candidate. If a member has a legitimate concern about a candidate the Elders will go into further deliberation regarding the issues presented by the members. If there are no significant concerns the Elder candidate will be considered “affirmed” by the congregation.

The Elders may appoint a committee or group to vet Elder candidates and report its findings to the Elder body. The Elders may also receive recommendations for Elder candidates from Church Members.

12.3 Elder Service

Elders may be vocational, bi-vocational, paid or unpaid. Elder service continues for as long as an Elder is qualified to be an Elder. Sabbaticals for various reasons may be granted for a season, during which the Elder is inactive and does not vote. A letter of resignation, to be approved by the Board of Elders, must precede resignation from the office of Elder.

If the Elder body determines that an Elder needs an extended Sabbath because of a legitimate need (e.g., illness or tragedy), then such Elder may transition to being an active but nonvoting Elder for a set period of time determined by the Elder body.

To resign from the Elder body, an Elder shall notify, in writing, the officers of the Church who are also members of the Elder body. Such officers shall determine the most fruitful and edifying way to notify the remaining Elders and the Church Members. A vacancy in the Elder body because of death, resignation, removal or any other cause shall be filled only in the manners prescribed in these Bylaws. Such vacancies may be filled as they occur.

12.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Elders

Elders of Wesley Chapel commit by the grace of God to intentionally and responsibly fulfill the biblical duties and responsibilities of Christ's under-shepherds. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Rule/lead the church (1 Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17). The Elders are responsible to oversee all the ministries and business affairs of the church.
- b) Preach and teach the Bible (1 Timothy 4:13; 5:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2), submitting to the final authority of the scriptures in all matters (Psalm 119:1-176; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- c) Instruct and encourage the church with sound doctrine (Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Titus 1:9) and protect the church from false doctrine (Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9).
- d) Give devoted attention to prayer and Scripture study (Acts 6:4).
- e) Care and watch over the souls of the people in the church (1 Peter 5:2-5; Hebrews 13:17).
- f) Pray for the church and those who are sick (Acts 6:4; James 5:14).
- g) Handle and distribute money to the glory of God (Acts 11:29-30; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Peter 5:2). This includes stewarding of church finances and property using generally accepted accounting practices. It includes making wise property purchase, prudent decisions about the proper investment of church assets, and overseeing the salary and benefit structures for church employees, etc. It also includes giving to the church from personal income.
- h) Develop godly leadership in the church (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:10; 4:14; 5:22; Titus 1:5). This includes small group leaders and Deacons, both of who are under the oversight of the Elders.

- i) Lovingly discipline members who persist in sin, with the goal of restoration to full fellowship (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 1:6; Titus 3:10).
- j) Protect the church from divisiveness (Titus 3:10).

The Board of Elders may structure and organize itself however it deems necessary for the sake of simplicity, clarity of communication, and efficiency of organization, according to the needs of the Church and the size of the Board of Elders. Any such restructuring must preserve the plurality of Elders, and the calling, character, competencies, and chemistry requirements for Elders articulated above.

To promote efficient handling of its matters, the Board of Elders may appoint various councils and committees from within its membership, the staff, and from the church at large. These councils and committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and the powers specifically delegated by the Board of Elders. All councils and committees shall exist for the period specified by the Board of Elders and serve under its authority.

12.5 Removal of Elders

An Elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two or more members with reason to believe that an Elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the Elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in (Matthew 18: 15–17) and (1 Timothy 5: 17–21).

Any Elder may be removed from the office of Elder for valid cause. Discipline of Elders must be consistent with the standards set forth in Article X of these Bylaws. The Elder body will determine the specific procedure for removal of an Elder. This procedure may be altered, amended, repealed or restated by a resolution of the Elders. The Elders shall have the final authority to remove an Elder.

A written notice of the proposed removal of any Elder shall be given to such Elder at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting at which an action to effectuate such removal is to be taken to ensure that the Elder is given a reasonable opportunity to defend himself. The Elder shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his removal. Such removal shall take place only upon and after a passing vote of the Elders (defined in §12.6 below). Such removal shall take place only upon and after a passing vote of the Elders. The Elder under consideration for removal shall not have voting rights while such removal is considered.

12.6 Elder Meetings

The Board of Elders shall hold regular meetings. Either the Lead Pastor or other Elders may call additional special meetings. A selected member of the Elders or staff shall make a reasonable effort to notify the team of Elders of any special meetings. Notice of regular meetings need to be given.

Members of the Board of Elders may participate in meeting of the Board by means of conference telephone, video technology, or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting.

Each Elder shall have one vote. As pertains to major issues, the Board of Elders shall try to act by consensus. However, a 75% majority of the Board present and voting at a meeting at which the quorum is present shall be sufficient to constitute an act of the Board, unless (a) the act of a greater number is required by the Act or the Bylaws, or (b) there is a simple majority with only a single dissenting vote, in which case a number lower than 75% is sufficient. A member of the Board who is present at a meeting and abstains from a vote is considered to be present and voting for the purpose of determining the decision of the Board.

A proper quorum is defined as seventy-five percent (75%) of the Elders. A quorum is required for voting matters. A passing vote must be equal to or greater than seventy-five percent (75%) of the Elders present. The Board of Elders shall keep a record of its proceedings.

Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Board of Elders may be taken without a meeting if all the members of the Board of Elders, individually or collectively, consent in writing or via electronic transmission to the action. Such action by written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes.

12.7 Lead Pastor

The Lead Pastor functions as the first among equals. It is the duty of the Lead Pastor to help lead the Eldership and the rest of the church in effectively obeying God's leading as revealed in Scripture. The Lead Pastor shall be called for an indefinite term of office.

The primary responsibility of the Lead Pastor shall be preaching, casting vision, leadership development, administration and oversight of the Elders, and oversight of the Board of Elders meetings. He shall be directly accountable to the Elders, who will advise, assist, and evaluate both he and his work.

The Lead Pastor shall be an Elder. He shall perform the duties of an Elder described in §12.4, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching and will be the first

among the Elders to do so full-time when sufficient funds to support such activity become available. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office.

In the absence or incapacity of the Lead Pastor the Elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

If a vacancy is created as a result of the resignation, death, or removal of the Lead Pastor, the vacancy shall be filled as soon as practical. In the event that a new Lead Pastor is to be called, the Pastoral Search Committee will be made up of the Elders.

When the Elders identify a candidate for the Lead Pastor position, the Elders will present him to the Wesley Chapel membership for affirmation. The Elders will consciously listen to any objections from members of the congregation. They will discuss them at a subsequent Board of Elders Meeting. A new Lead Pastor will be selected according to what is prescribed in §12.2 above and may be removed according to what is prescribed in §12.5 above.

12.8 Associate Pastor

The church may call an additional pastor whose relationship to the Lead Pastor is that of associate.

An Associate Pastor shall be an Elder. He shall perform the duties of an Elder described in §12.4, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching and will follow the Lead Pastor in doing so full-time when sufficient funds to support such activity become available.

He shall directly assist the Lead Pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the Lead Pastor and fellow Elders.

In the absence or incapacity of the Lead Pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the Associate Pastor shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the Elders.

If a vacancy is created as a result of the resignation, death, or removal of the Associate Pastor, the vacancy shall be filled as soon as practical. In the event that a new Associate Pastor is to be called, the Pastoral Search Committee will be made up of the Elders.

When the Elders identify a candidate for the Associate Pastor position, the Elders will present him to the Wesley Chapel membership for affirmation. The Elders will consciously listen to any objections from members of the congregation. They

will discuss them at a subsequent Board of Elders Meeting. A new Associate Pastor will be selected according to what is prescribed in §12.2 above and may be removed according to what is prescribed in §12.5 above.

12.9 Assistant Pastor(s)

The church may call additional pastors, from within the congregation only, whose relationship to the Lead Pastor is that of assistant.

An Assistant Pastor shall be an Elder. He shall perform the duties of an Elder described in §12.4, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching and will follow the Lead and Associate Pastor in doing so full-time when sufficient funds to support such activity become available.

He shall assist the Lead Pastor and Associate Pastor in the performance of their regular duties, and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor. The Elders shall define the responsibilities of the Assistant Pastor(s).

12.10 Ordinations, Ministerial Licensing, and Education of Pastors

The Lead, Associate, and Assistant pastors of Wesley Chapel are to be Licensed Ministers or Ordained Elders in the International Fellowship of Bible Churches.

It is also preferred that all pastors of Wesley Chapel are formally educated or in the process of being educated in a Bible College or Seminary. It is also preferred that the Bible College or Seminary reflects a Wesleyan-Arminian theological orientation.

Article XII. Deacons

13.1 Deacons & Deaconesses

The Church shall have a spiritual office of Deacon that is subordinate to the office of Elder. Unlike the office of Elder, Deacons may be male or female. Deacons must meet the qualifications of a Deacon set forth in the Bible (1 Timothy 3:8-13). The general responsibility of Deacons shall be to assist the Elders in the ministry of Wesley Chapel. The Elders will give specific responsibilities, tasks, or ministries to Deacons.

Scripture does not require Deacons to be able to teach, indicating that their ministry is orientated in the directions of mercy, service, and administration, rather than ruling through teaching. This office provides wide latitude to promote the work of ministry in and through the church in a way that involves many members in weighty and meaningful ways while protecting the Elders from becoming overwhelmed with the many needs of the flock.

Deacons must whole-heartedly affirm the Bylaws, Mission Statement, Membership Agreement, Core Values, and other important documents of Wesley Chapel. They agree to notify the Board of Elders if they take “exception” to anything in these documents. If they take exception to anything in these documents, the Board of Elders will determine if their exceptions are disqualifying.

The term of service as a Deacon depends upon the commission given by the Elder nominating the individual to serve as Deacon. Some Deacons may serve for a specific task; others serve indefinitely. The Deacon may resign by delivering notice to the Board of Elders or Lead pastor, or, if due to legitimate need, seek an extended Sabbath as determined by the Board of Elders or Lead Pastor.

13.2 Appointment of Deacons & Deaconesses

The Elders shall have the sole authority to appoint Deacons. The Elders shall communicate prospective Deacons to the Church or a subset thereof prior to an Elder vote. Comments received from the Church will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Confirmation of Deacons will be at the final discretion of the Elders and requires a passing vote.

13.3 Removal of Deacons & Deaconesses

Any Deacon may be removed from office for valid cause. A written notice of proposed removal of any Deacon shall be given to the Elders at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to affect such removal is to be taken to ensure that the Deacon is given a reasonable opportunity for defense. The Deacon shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his or her accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his or her removal. The removal of a Deacon requires a passing vote of the Elders.

Article XIV. Officers

14.1 Clerk

It shall be the duty of the Clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members’ meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the Lead Pastor, the Elders, the Deacons, or the church.

The clerk shall be nominated and elected by the Elders for a term deemed appropriate by the Elders. The Clerk may be removed following the same procedure outlined in the “Removal of Deacons and Deaconesses” (§13. 3). In the absence or incapacity of the clerk the Elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.

14.2 Treasurer

The Treasurer, who shall not be an active Elder, Deacon, or paid church staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at member's meeting.

The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the Elders. The Treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church.

The Treasurer shall render to the Elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The Treasurer shall be nominated and elected by the Elders for a term deemed appropriate by the Elders. The Treasurer may be removed following the same procedure outlined in the "Removal of Deacons and Deaconesses" (§13. 3).

Article XV. Prohibited Activities

The church is prohibited from engaging in activities which violate its written doctrines. This church is also prohibited from condoning, promoting, or allowing any of its assets to be used for activities that violate its written doctrines.

Article XVI. Mutual Interest

The behavior of anyone in fellowship with this church is the common interest to the Board of Elders and members (Galatians 6:1).

Wesley Chapel requires every Elder, Deacon, staff member, and church member to adhere to a lifestyle that is consistent with the doctrines of the church as taught in the Bible. Therefore, this church reserves the right to refuse service to any individual, whether a member or not, that is not submitting their lifestyle to this scriptural mode of conduct. This refusal would include services, benefits, and any use of church assets.

Article XVII. Church Ministries and Organizations

All ministries, programs and organizations of the church shall operate under the oversight of the Elders and report regularly to the congregation.

Article XIX. Indemnifications

19.1 Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the Elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

19.2 Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the Elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

19.3 Procedure

If a quorum of the Elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of Elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

19.4 Insurance

Wesley Chapel may purchase and maintain insurance, at its expense, to protect itself and any Elder, officer, employee, or agent against any expense, liability, or loss.

XX. Dispute Resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18: 15–20; I Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves as far as possible according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or non-Christian and whether individuals or corporate entities.

XXI. Church Disruption

Any person deemed by an Elder to pose a physical or psychological threat to any person or to the Church, or to be causing, about to cause, or capable of causing disruption to the religious services and activities of the Church, shall be considered a trespasser on Church property and may be ejected summarily. No Church employee or Elder shall incur any liability for acting in good faith in the interests of the Church pursuant to this section.

XXII. Dissolution

“Dissolution” means the complete disbanding of the Church so that it no longer functions as a congregation or as a corporate entity. Upon the dissolution of the Church, its property shall be applied and distributed as follows: (1) all liabilities and obligations of the Church shall be paid and discharged, or adequate provision shall be made therefore; (2) assets held by the Church upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements; (3) assets received and not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance by reason of the dissolution, shall be transferred or conveyed to one or more domestic or foreign corporations, societies, or organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and are engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the Church; this distribution shall be done pursuant to a plan adopted by the Elders by passing vote as defined in §12.6 of these Bylaws; and (4) any assets not otherwise disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the Church is then located, for such purposes and to such organizations as said court shall determine, provided such organizations are likeminded churches and/or non-denominational, evangelical, or tax-exempt religious organization.

XXIII. Amendments

Excepting those alterations included under §8.5, “Voting by Members,” these Bylaws or any provision contained herein may only be altered, amended, repealed or restated, and new Bylaws adopted, by the vote of 100% quorum of all current Elders. Essentially, the vote must be unanimous by all current Elders.

XXIV. Books and Records

Wesley Chapel shall keep correct and complete books and records of account.

- a) Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws shall be kept indefinitely.
- b) Lists of members, Elders, and officers shall be kept current.
- c) Minutes shall be kept for a minimum of 3 years.
- d) Complete financial books, records of account, and legal documents shall be maintained for such a length of time as deemed appropriate by the Board of Elders

Records shall be available to be inspected by any active member for reasonable purpose at any reasonable time. Requests to view records must be made to the Board of Elders.