

Webster Bible Church

Constitution and By-laws

As amended on May 26, 2021

Article 1 – Organization and Purpose

1.1 – Name

The name of this church is Webster Bible Church.

1.2 – Purpose

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, for such purposes including, but not limited to, proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; establishing and maintaining religious worship; educating believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture; and maintaining missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country.

1.3 – Fiscal Year

The fiscal year for all ministries of Webster Bible Church runs from July 1 through June 30.

1.4 – Property and Funds

1.4.1 – Property

All funds and properties of organizations or classes of this church are automatically the property of the church.

1.4.2 – Borrowing of Funds

The church will be permitted to borrow monies, as deemed necessary, upon recommendation of the Board of Elders and an affirmative vote by 2/3 vote of the congregation.

1.4.3 – Payment of Expenses

The expenses of Webster Bible Church (excluding Webster Christian School) shall be paid from funds raised by freewill giving of God's people and/or borrowing, per Section 1.4.2.

1.5 – Amendments

This constitution may be amended as an agenda item at a corporate business meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting. Advanced notice of such a meeting will follow the rules outlined in Section 5.5 of this document.

1.6 – Exceptions

Any exceptions to any of the policies in the Constitution recommended by the Board of Elders may be granted at a corporate business meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting.

Article 2 – What We Believe

2.1 – Statement of Faith

2.1.1 – Scripture

We believe that the Bible, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, was spoken by God through human authors and is without error in the original manuscripts. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, and is the supreme authority in all matters on which it speaks.¹

2.1.2 – God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God: an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth. He is inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and

¹ 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:20-21

worthy of all honor, confidence, and love. He eternally exists in three persons, who are equal in every divine perfection, and who execute distinct but harmonious roles in the work of creation, providence, judgment and redemption.²

2.1.3 – God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. He infallibly determines all that comes to pass and concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of mankind. He hears and answers prayer and saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.³

2.1.4 – God the Son

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin, thus fully God and fully man. We believe in His sinless life; substitutionary and atoning death; bodily resurrection; ascension into heaven; perpetual intercession for His people; and future, personal, visible return to earth.⁴

2.1.5 – God the Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. He convicts the world of its sin, of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. He regenerates, sanctifies, and empowers all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells, helps, teaches, and guides every believer.⁵

2.1.6 – Humanity

We believe humanity is the special creation of God, made in His image, the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning, mankind was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. Adam sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. On account of Adam's disobedience, all people are sinners by nature and by choice. Only the grace of God can bring people into fellowship with Him and enable them to fulfill the purpose of God.⁶

² Psalm 90:1-2; Matthew 28:19, John 5:22

³ 1 Peter 1:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:12-14

⁴ John 1:1; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

⁵ John 15:26; 16:8,13-14; Galatians 5:22-26; Titus 3:5

⁶ Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:23; 5:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17

2.1.7 – Salvation

We believe the Gospel: that salvation is wholly of God by grace, on the basis of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and not on the basis of human merit or works. Forgiveness and eternal life with God are granted to those who by grace turn from their sin and place their faith in Christ alone for salvation. However, eternal, conscious punishment and separation from God in the lake of fire are reserved for those who do not believe and instead reject the Gospel of Christ.⁷

2.1.8 – Christian Living

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and to serve others. Christians should aspire to be like Christ and to advance His kingdom through the faithful stewardship of their time, abilities, and possessions.⁸

2.1.9 – Marriage and Sexuality

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one, legitimate meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, covenantal union, as delineated by Scripture. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility owned, leased or rented by this church will be only those ceremonies sanctioned by God, joining one man with one woman as their genders were determined at birth. Whenever there is a conflict between the church’s position and any new legal standard for marriage, the church’s statement of faith, doctrines and biblical positions will govern.⁹

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage as defined above. We believe that any other type of sexual activity, identity or expression that lies outside of this definition of marriage, including those that are becoming more accepted in the culture and the courts, are contradictory to God’s natural design and purpose for sexual activity.¹⁰

2.1.10 – Family Relationships

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and

⁷ Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:36; Revelation 20:10-15

⁸ 1 Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15, 23-24; 1 John 2:3-6; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 1:9-10

⁹ Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:22-23; Mark 10:6-9; I Cor. 7:1-9

¹⁰ Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9-10; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4

the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and elders) of the church.¹¹

We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a wonderful gift and heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate training and discipline.¹²

2.1.11 – The Church

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a community of believers in Jesus Christ, who have been baptized as an expression of their faith, and are united for worship, work, and fellowship. God has commissioned the local church with the essential tasks of proclaiming the Gospel to all peoples and developing fully devoted followers of Christ.¹³

2.1.12 – The Ordinances

We believe that the scriptural ordinances of the local church are baptism and the Lord's Supper; that baptism, by immersion, should be administered to believers only, as an identifying symbol of their belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Baptism also symbolizes our death to sin and resurrection to a new walk in life. It is a prerequisite to local church membership. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of and the New Covenant established through His death and also of His resurrection. Participation should be preceded by salvation and solemn self-examination.¹⁴

2.1.13 – The Eternal State

We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness

¹¹ Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12

¹² Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Pet. 3:1-7

¹³ Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 10:23-25; Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁴ Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace.¹⁵

2.1.14 – Lawsuits Within the Church.

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits within the Church. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander.¹⁶

2.2 – Authority of the Statement of Faith

The Statement of Faith does not articulate the full extent of our teaching. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We believe the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members, staff and volunteers. All literature (whether print or electronic) used in the church, and teaching performed in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith.

All activities permitted or performed in any facilities owned, rented or leased by this church, or engaged in by any member of the church staff (volunteer or paid), and all decisions of the administration of this church shall not conflict with the Statement of Faith

In all conflicts regarding interpretation of the Statement of Faith, the Senior Pastor and Board of Elders, on behalf of the church, have the final authority. There are other distinctive beliefs, which demonstrate the Board of Elders' particular interpretation of the Bible and may not be universally held by all followers of Christ. Members of Webster Bible Church may differ in their interpretation of Scripture regarding these distinctive beliefs yet for the sake of unity may not create controversy or cause division over these issues.

¹⁵ Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:10-21:8; 1 Corinthians 15

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32

Article 3 – Membership

3.1 – Membership Covenant

All members must affirm the following:

God, by His grace alone, has led me to repent of my sin and believe on Jesus Christ, trusting Him alone as my Lord and Savior. As one who has been baptized as a believer in Christ, I desire to unite with this church family. I enter into a covenantal relationship with the members of this church. In humble reliance on the Holy Spirit, I endeavor to do the following:

- To faithfully attend and participate in the regular worship services of the church.¹⁷
- To diligently guard the truth, upholding the standard of sound words recorded in Scripture.¹⁸
- To wholeheartedly support, love, and care for the church’s members and ministries, offering my prayers,¹⁹ my financial gifts,²⁰ and my humble service.²¹
- To boldly witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, living a transformed life and sharing the gospel as God gives opportunity.²²
- To actively pursue personal holiness before God in accordance with His Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit.²³

¹⁷ Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25

¹⁸ 1 Timothy 3:15; 6:3-4, 20; 2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2:14-15, 24-26; 4:3-5; Jude 3

¹⁹ Ephesians 1:15-20; 3:14-21; Philippians 1:3-6, 9-11; Colossians 1:3-12; 4:2-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-4; 5:17

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7; 9:6-7; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 6:17-19

²¹ Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12-13; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11

²² Matthew 4:19; 5:16; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 5:42; 1 Peter 3:15

²³ Romans 12:9; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Galatians 2:20; 5:16-26; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Peter 1:15-16

- To diligently promote and guard the unity of the church, loving others as Christ has loved us, and being a peacemaker with all in the body of Christ.²⁴
- To respectfully follow the leaders of this church, esteeming them in love and submitting to and supporting their leadership.²⁵
- To humbly submit to the church's discipline²⁶, graciously repenting when approached about personal sin, and lovingly restoring others who become entangled in sin.²⁷

3.2 – Privileges of Membership

Membership in a local body of believers is an important part of the Christian life. Along with the afore-mentioned responsibilities, it also bestows many blessings, including:

- You are affirmed: Membership is the church's way of recognizing you as a citizen of Christ's kingdom and supporting you in your Christian walk.
- You are part of a family: It is within the accountability structures of the local church that Christians live and experience the interconnectivity of Christ's body, the spiritual fullness of His temple, and the safety and intimacy and shared identity of His family.
- You have a place to serve: Membership helps you know which Christians on planet Earth you are specifically responsible to love, serve, warn, and encourage. It enables you to fulfill your biblical responsibilities to Christ's body.
- You are not alone: Membership places an individual Christian's claim to obey and follow Jesus into a real-life setting where authority is actually exercised over us. Each member is held accountable to the others to follow through on the life Christ has called us to lead and we will love, encourage, confront, and as a last resort discipline each other as Christ called us to do.

²⁴ Matthew 5:9; John 13:34-35; Romans 12:18-21; 14:19; Ephesians 4:1-6, 29-32; Philippians 2:1-5; Colossians 3:12-14; Hebrews 12:14

²⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17-21; Hebrews 13:7, 17

²⁶ see section 3.5

²⁷ Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:6-13; Galatians 6:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15;

- You are allowed to serve a deeper role: Membership makes you eligible to vote in congregational meetings and to be considered for the positions of church officer, ministry leader, and/or teacher.
- You have an expanded witness: Membership puts the rule of Christ on display for a watching universe²⁸. The boundaries of membership yield a society that invites the nations to something better. The collective economy of the church allows your mission dollars to make a far greater impact on the world.

Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The Senior Pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the Board) has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the Senior Pastor, (or in his absence, an individual designated by the Board), be treated as a trespasser.

A member may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church and the minutes of the proceedings of church and committee meetings, provided he shall have made a written request upon the church and the church has received the written request at least five business days before the requested inspection date. Board meeting minutes and discipline committee meetings, as well as other information involving privacy interests, such as, but not limited to donor records, lists of names and addresses of church members, individual benevolence, individual salaries, health information, background checks, and social security numbers, are exempt from this provision and are not subject to inspection or copy without a court order. The church may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and materials, for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member.

3.3 – Qualifications for Membership

Candidates for membership of this church shall be at least 18 years of age and give sufficient evidence that they have:

²⁸ Ephesians 3:10; Romans 2:17-24

- been born of the Holy Spirit having embraced Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- been baptized by immersion (if physically able) after conversion to Christ in obedience to our Lord's command, as a public profession of their faith in Christ. The only exception to this qualification, upon the approval of the Board of Elders, shall be in the case where a believer, as a public profession of his or her faith in Christ, was baptized with water in a different mode by another evangelical church and this believer indicates that to be “rebaptized” would violate his or her conscience. In such cases, after careful deliberation, the Board of Elders may still approve the candidate for membership.
- agreed to fully support the Statement of Faith²⁹ and follow the Membership Covenant³⁰.

3.4 – Process of Membership

Becoming a member of Webster Bible Church is accomplished by the following:

- The perspective member initiates the process by informing a pastor, elder, or a deacon of their desire to become a member.
- They must attend a membership seminar.
- They must consent to support and abide by the Statement of Faith, the Constitution, and the Membership Covenant by signing a statement that they have read and understand and will support the same.
- They must obey the Lord’s command to be baptized if they have not yet done so.
- They must share their testimony with a selected sample of the church leadership.
- If approved by the Board of Elders they will be presented for a congregational vote and will be accepted into membership on a majority vote of those present.

²⁹ see section 2.1 – Article of Faith

³⁰ see section 3.1 – Membership Covenant

3.5 – Discipline of Members

3.5.1 – The Purpose of Church Discipline

Church discipline exists for five reasons: for the good of the person disciplined³¹, for the good of other Christians as they see the danger of sin³², for the health of the church as a whole³³, for the corporate witness of the church³⁴, and for the glory of God by reflecting his Holy character³⁵.

3.5.2 – The Process of Church Discipline³⁶

Members of this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture, shall be subject to the following steps of church discipline, according to Matthew 18:15-18.

3.5.2.1 – Steps of Church Discipline

- 1) It shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of a member's alleged false doctrine or misconduct to understand, assess and if found true, warn and admonish the erring member in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring member repents or if the allegation is found to be false, the process concludes at this stage with rejoicing.
- 2) If the erring member does not heed this warning, then the warning member shall again go to the erring member, seeking repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring member has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. Should the erring member repent at this stage, again, the process concludes with rejoicing. The first and second meetings may occur with no specified time interval.

³¹ Galatians 6:1, 1 Corinthians 5:1-5

³² 1 Timothy 5:20

³³ 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

³⁴ Matthew 5:16; John 13:34-35; 1 Peter 2:12

³⁵ John 15:8; Romans 15:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17:1

³⁶ In this section, any reference to the Board of Elders could also apply to a committee appointed by and accountable to the Board of Elders for dealing with specific matters of church discipline.

- 3) If the erring member still refuses to heed the admonition of 2-3 gentle, concerned Christians, then it shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Elders. If the Board of Elders determines—after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture³⁷—that there is corroborating evidence of the erring member’s false doctrine or misconduct, that they have been appropriately confronted, and refused to repent, then the Elders shall inform the congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the erring member to repentance. If the erring member subsequently demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect will be given at a regularly scheduled worship service.
- 4) If, however, the erring member does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then they will be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and/or membership of the church at a regularly scheduled worship service. If the erring member, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Board of Elders, then at the discretion of the Board of Elders, they will be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and membership.

3.5.2.2 – Cause for Immediate Dismissal

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the elders in the exercise of their discretion may proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline, (i.e. the informing of the congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the erring member to repentance) or to the fourth stage of church discipline, (i.e. the dismissal from the fellowship and membership of the church) when one or more of the following have occurred:

- 1) Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have been public, i.e. open and to the offense of the whole Church.³⁸
- 2) Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed false or erroneous by the elders, and then chosen to disregard the direction and reproof of the elders.³⁹

³⁷ Matthew 18:15-18; 2 Timothy 5:19

³⁸ 1 Cor. 5:1-5

³⁹ Romans 16:17

³⁹

- 3) Where the disciplined party has been warned twice to cease from factious and divisive conduct and has chosen to disregard that warning⁴⁰.

3.5.2.3 – Church Officer, Ministry Leader, or Teacher

If the subject of a disciplinary matter is an elder, deacon, ministry leader, a teacher, or any other leadership role, they will be temporarily suspended from those duties until the investigation concludes, at the discretion of the Board of Elders. If the matter is resolved and the member restored, they may or may not (at the discretion of the Board of Elders) be reinstated to their former position.

3.5.2.4 – Binding Arbitration

The members of this church agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline. The members of this church further agree to submit to binding arbitration any legal matters within the church, which cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bring any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

The procedures for arbitration shall be as adopted by the Board. If the Board has not adopted procedures, the church will use arbitration procedures provided by the National Center for Life and Liberty. This arbitration provision is ecclesiastical and faith-based in nature, and is intended to operate under the rules and guidelines of this local church. It is not intended to operate under any state or federal guidelines for arbitration.

3.5.2.5 – Safety Concerns

Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the elders, a member, non-member regular attender, or other individual may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.

⁴⁰ Titus 3:10-11

3.5.3 – Termination of Membership

3.5.3.1 – Non-attendance

The membership of any individual shall automatically terminate without notice if the member in question has not regularly attended worship services in the preceding six months. Automatic termination may be waived in the case of members under church discipline, on extended absences due to travel or secondary residences elsewhere or other just cause, at the discretion of the Board of Elders.

3.5.3.1.1 – Dual membership

No member of this church may hold membership in another church. The membership of any individual shall automatically terminate without notice if the individual unites in membership with another church. Automatic termination may be waived in the case of members under church discipline, on extended absences due to travel or secondary residences elsewhere or other just cause, at the discretion of the Board of Elders.

3.5.3.2 – Transfer of Membership

A member in good standing who would like to join in membership to another church may request that letters of transfer be sent to their new church. This request, on condition of the approval of the Board of Elders, would terminate their membership at Webster Bible Church.

Should the member requesting transfer be under church discipline, the request will be denied and a response from the elders will be returned explaining the situation. If the member is later restored to good standing, they are then eligible once again to request a transfer of membership.

3.5.3.3 – Resignation

A member in good standing may resign at any time by written request at which time they will be removed from membership, subject to the discretion and approval of the Board of Elders.

Article 4 – Church Offices

4.1 – Election of Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses and Treasurer

4.1.1 – Candidates for the positions of Elder, Deacon, Deaconess and Treasurer shall be nominated by the members of the church and their qualifications for the position shall be approved by the Board of Elders. The list of approved candidates will be communicated to the congregation via posting in the Church and/or using other means of communication as approved by the Board of Elders. The approved slate of candidates will be confirmed by a majority vote of the voting members in attendance at a regular or special Congregational meeting.

4.2 – Board of Elders⁴¹

4.2.1 – Purpose

The structure for governing the local church is described and shown by example throughout Acts and the epistles of the New Testament. The ultimate authority is Christ, who is the Head of the church⁴², the Chief Shepherd of the flock⁴³, and the cornerstone of the God's temple⁴⁴. Under Christ's authority, the responsibility to govern, teach, and shepherd the local church is given to the elders, a group of servant leaders called out from and affirmed by the congregation, to fulfill their God-given responsibilities.

⁴¹ A helpful article for better understanding the Biblical perspective on the roles and responsibilities of an elder is “Biblical Eldership” written by Alexander Strauch and available at <http://www.peacemakers.net/resources/strauch/biblicaleldership.htm>. Much of the material in this section was taken from his ideas.

⁴² Ephesians 4:15-16

⁴³ 1 Peter 5:4

⁴⁴ Ephesians 2:19-22

4.2.2 – Composition

The Board of Elders (the “Board”) is composed of the Senior Pastor as well as men from the church membership who are Biblically qualified⁴⁵ to lead. The size of the board will be determined by the needs of the church at the discretion of the existing Board of Elders. The number of elders called from the congregation will always exceed the number of elders from the pastoral staff.

The New Testament makes no distinction between a Pastor and an Elder. As such there is no differentiation within the Board between those on the pastoral staff and those from the congregation. The Board operates as a “council of equals” where each member equally shares the position, authority, and responsibility of the office, though each will fulfill different roles and responsibilities based on their individual gifts.

4.2.3 – Qualifications

The qualifications of an elder are stipulated in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The overarching qualification is that an elder be above reproach. This is evident in the man’s character and interpersonal relationships. Moreover, he must be able to teach sound doctrine and to refute false doctrine.

4.2.4 – Responsibilities

The responsibilities of an Elder include all of the following:

- Teaching – Elders are responsible to teach and to approve others who teach and the materials they utilize.
- Overseeing – Elders are responsible to lead and guide the congregation⁴⁶, so as to lead the flock toward Christ-likeness⁴⁷ and to conduct the affairs of the church in a decent and orderly manner⁴⁸. This Board shall function as Trustees in accordance with the laws of New York State.
- Protecting – Elders are responsible to protect the flock against false doctrine.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ 1 Tim. 3:1-7

⁴⁶ 1 Tim. 3:6

⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians 11:1

⁴⁸ 1 Corinthians 14:40

⁴⁹ Titus 1:9

- Shepherding – Elders are to care for the flock primarily through prayer and the ministry of the Word.⁵⁰
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4.2.5 – Term of Service

The term of an elder will be for three years. At the end of the first term of office, he can be re-elected for a second three-year term, but must take at least one year's leave from the office after serving for six consecutive years.

4.2.6 – Dismissal of an Elder

The Board of Elders reserves the right to dismiss an Elder by two-thirds (2/3) vote of that Board of Elders in the event of substantiated immorality, heretical teaching, or habitual violation of scriptural qualifications described in 4.2.3 –Qualifications.

4.2.7 – Vacancies

In the event that any of the elected elder positions become vacant, the Board of Elders may temporarily fill such vacancies until the next business meeting when the normal election procedure will be carried out.

4.2.8 – Officers

At the first meeting of the church fiscal year, the Elder Board shall elect the Elder Board officers to serve for that fiscal year. An elder may serve in multiple roles if necessary.

4.2.8.1 – Chairman

The Chairman shall preside at all Board meetings, which are to be conducted according to scriptural principles such as set forth in Phil. 2:2-8, and according to accepted parliamentary procedures. The Chairman shall, in the absence of the Pastors, be responsible for the leadership of the church services.

4.2.8.2 – Vice-Chairman

The Vice-Chairman shall assume all the duties of the Chairman in his absence.

4.2.8.3 – Secretary

The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the Board and collect all official correspondence relating to the Board. He shall be charged with giving proper notice to the

⁵⁰ Acts 6:4

congregation of annual and special meetings and shall record the minutes at all corporate business meetings.

4.2.8.4 – Designation of Corporate Officers

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the Senior Pastor shall serve as president of the corporation; the chairman of the Board shall serve as vice president of the corporation; the church secretary shall serve as secretary of the corporation; and the church treasurer shall serve as treasurer of the corporation.

4.3 – Deacons

The Deacons shall consist of members possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The Deacons shall serve for a term of three (3) years. The Deacons shall assist the Elders in ministering to the congregation, administering the ordinances, and other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders. In the event that any of the elected Deacon positions become vacant, the Board of Elders may temporarily fill such vacancies until the next business meeting when the normal election procedure will be carried out.

4.4 – Deaconesses

The Deaconesses shall consist of members possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2:3-5. The Deaconesses shall serve for a term of three (3) years. The Deaconesses shall assist the Elders in ministering to the congregation, administering the ordinances, and other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders. In the event that any of the elected Deaconess positions become vacant, the Board of Elders may temporarily fill such vacancies until the next business meeting when the normal election procedure will be carried out.

4.5 – Pastoral Staff

4.5.1 – Senior Pastor

4.5.1.1 – Election, Call, and Appointment

The Senior Pastor shall be selected by the Board of Elders and confirmed by the members of the church at a special business meeting. The candidate will be issued a call to ministry by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of those voting members present, and voting. Upon his acceptance, He shall remain in office an indefinite period of time subject to the following conditions:

- The Board of Elders reserves the right to dismiss the Senior Pastor upon giving him one month's written notice of its intention to dismiss.
- Immediate dismissal may occur by two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Elder Board in the event of substantiated immorality, heretical teaching, or habitual violation of the scriptural qualifications described in 4.2.3 –Qualifications.
- The Senior Pastor must give one month's notice if he intends to resign.
- The time limit of a Senior Pastor's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the Senior Pastor and the Elder Board decide otherwise.

4.5.1.2 – Duties

The Senior Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all councils and committees, and he shall be responsible to the Board of Elders. The Senior Pastor shall arrange for and conduct all public and regular services of the church and shall be responsible for general oversight of the spiritual welfare of the church

4.5.2 –Assistant Pastors

Each Assistant Pastor shall be selected by the Elder Board in cooperation with the Sr. Pastor and confirmed by the members of the church at a business meeting called for that purpose. The Election, Call, Appointment processes and term for each Assistant Pastor shall be identical to the Senior Pastor as stipulated above in Section 4.5.1.1.

4.6 – Other Councils and Committees

To promote efficient handling of Church 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 with powers specifically delegated by the Board of Elders. The general functions of councils and committees are:

- To bring considered recommendations to the Board concerning ministries.
- To provide a wider base of counsel to the Elders having the oversight of specific ministries.

All councils and committees shall exist for the period specified by the Board.

4.6.1.1 – Treasurer

The Treasurer oversees the financial activities of the Church. In this role, he/she interfaces with the Business Administrator with the accountability and disbursement of all monies of the Church. This position has a two year term.

Article 5 – Meetings

5.1 – Regular Worship Services

This church shall have a worship service each week where the Word of God is preached and taught under the direction of the Senior Pastor or a designee of the Board of Elders. There may be other opportunities during the week for teaching, accountability, and fellowship based on the needs and desires of the congregation.

The roles of teacher or ministry leader may only be filled by persons who have been a member in good standing for at least one year prior to serving in a leadership role and only after approval by the Board of Elders. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Board of Elders.

5.2 – Business Meetings

A minimum of one business meeting each year will be held for the approval of the general budget of Webster Bible Church and all associated ministries and the election of church officers. This meeting will be held prior to and within six (6) weeks of the end of the church fiscal year. Congregational meetings will be moderated by the Chairman of the Board of Elders or another designee of the Board of Elders.

5.3 – Budget Approval

If the congregation does not approve the proposed budget, a special business meeting will be called for the purpose of approving the budget. If the budget is not passed at the second meeting, the budget of the previous year shall remain in effect.

5.4 – Special Business Meetings

The Senior Pastor or the Chairman of the Board of Elders upon recommendation by the Board of Elders may call special corporate business meetings. A special corporate business meeting can also be called by written request of fifty (50) members who are in good standing.

5.5 – Notice of Congregational Business Meetings

All congregational meetings (regular annual meetings or special meetings) shall be announced on two (2) consecutive Sunday morning services and notice given to the congregation. This congregational notice shall include the date, time, and agenda for the meeting.

5.6 – Meeting Protocol

Only members in good standing shall be allowed to actively participate in any church business meeting unless approved by the Board of Elders. Unless otherwise specified, congregational approval shall require majority vote of those members present and in good standing.

5.7 – Quorum

A quorum is required to transact business at corporate business meetings. A quorum consists of 15% of the members of record as of the prior calendar quarter-end. Only those members in attendance who are in good standing will be counted toward meeting the quorum requirement.

Article 6 – Tax Exempt Provisions

6.1 – Private Inurement

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Section 1.02 hereof.

6.2 – Political Involvement

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

6.3 – Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the church, the Board shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as the Board shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax-exempt organizations that agree with the church's Statement of Faith.

6.4 – Racial Nondiscrimination

The church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and, therefore, shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

6.5 – Limitation of Activities

Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Section 1.2.

Article 7 – Designated Contributions

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. If the church receives a designated contribution for these funds or for any other designated purpose, the church will attempt to honor the designation; however, all designated contributions shall be deemed advisory rather than legally mandatory in nature and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Senior Pastor and the Board. No fiduciary obligation shall be

created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Section 1.2.