

# **Bylaws**

*of the*

## **WAKE CROSS ROADS BAPTIST CHURCH INC.**

### **Preamble**

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain servants to unite here in 1789 under the name The Baptist Church of Christ at Cross Roads, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ to sustain and prosper this work to the present day; and

Whereas we, the members of Wake Cross Roads Baptist Church Incorporated, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to replace the bylaws to conform more closely to His will for the Church and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name;

Now therefore we, the members of Wake Cross Roads Baptist Church Incorporated, do hereby adopt these bylaws as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the church's Statement of Faith.

### **Article 1 – Name**

This body shall be known as **Wake Cross Roads Baptist Church Incorporated**. (“WCR”).

### **Article 2 – Mission**

Wake Cross Roads Baptist Church exists “to present the gospel of Jesus Christ in such a way to turn non-Christians into converts, converts into disciples, and disciples into mature, fruitful leaders, who will, in turn, go into our neighborhoods and the nations to reach others for Christ.”<sup>i</sup>

### **Article 3 – Statement of Faith**

#### Section 1. The Baptist Faith & Message 2000

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the basis for our beliefs and actions. WCR subscribes to the doctrinal statement of The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000.

#### Section 2. Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders reflect the image and nature of God (Gen 1:26-27). Rejection of one's birth sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4).

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, as defined by the Bible (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of WCR as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the WCR members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by WCR in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing speech, behavior, or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of WCR.

### Section 3. Statement on 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 (Ps. 139).

### Section 4. Statement of 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 WCR’s faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our elders, collectively, are WCR’s final interpretive authority on the Bible’s application.

## **Article 4 – Ordinances**

The ordinances of the church are believer’s baptism by immersion and the Lord’s Supper (Rom 6:1-11; 1 Cor 11:17-34).

## Article 5 – Membership Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion with believer's baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one Body in Christ:

- TO commit ourselves as members to honor, esteem, and love our staff, elders, deacons, and one another;
- TO pray for each other constantly and to manifest tender regard for our reputation;
- TO walk together in Christian love by the aid of the Holy Spirit; to strive for the advancement of this Church and its ministries; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines;
- TO contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations; and to manage all the resources God has entrusted to us in such a way that He is glorified;
- TO encourage family and private devotions; to educate our children in matters of our Christian faith; to prayerfully seek the salvation of our relatives, friends and neighbors, and the nations;
- TO encourage each other to abstain from all drugs, food, intoxicating drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.
- TO walk worthy of our calling in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to engagements and exemplary in our demeanor and conduct; to avoid malicious use of the tongue; not to be a stumbling block and to keep our testimonies above reproach; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior;
- TO seek to identify, develop and utilize our spiritual gift(s) and abilities; and to seek a place of service within the body, with the support and affirmation of the body;
- TO watch over one another in brotherly love; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feelings and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation and, mindful of scriptural guidelines, to secure it without delay; and

TO pledge that when we move from this place, we will unite with some other biblically faithful church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **Article 6 – Church Relationships**

This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches.

WCR will cooperate with and support the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Southern Baptist Convention. Any decision to disassociate with the Baptist State Convention of NC and/or the Southern Baptist Convention must be recommended by the elders and approved by the congregation with a three-fourths vote of voting members at a regular or special business meeting of the members.

## **Article 7 – Membership**

### Section 1 – Qualifications

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 by immersion, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to subscribe and 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.

### Section 2 – Admission of Members

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

### Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

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 with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. In addition, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' business meetings and vote on:

- The election of elders, deacons, and corporate officers;
- Decisions regarding membership status, including church discipline;

- Approval of the annual budget;
- Approval of any transactions regarding real property;
- Merger or dissolution of the church;
- Matters submitted by the membership of the church, by the elders, or raised by a motion at a member's meeting;
- Amendments to the bylaws or Articles of Incorporation;
- The call and/or termination of any elder, deacon, or corporate officer.

#### Section 4 –Church Discipline

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 given in Matthew 18: 15–17, 1 Corinthians 5: 1-13, and the example of Scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, removal from office, and termination of membership or other disciplinary measures.

The purpose of such discipline should be:

- For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined;
- For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them;
- For the purity of the church as a whole;
- For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians; and
- Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

#### Section 5 – Termination of Membership

Termination of membership shall be recognized by the church following the death, transfer of membership, or voluntary written resignation of any church member, assuming the member is not under church disciplinary proceedings. In these situations, the elders may approve removal of these members and report those decisions to the church at a business meeting. Membership may be terminated as an act of church discipline at the recommendation of the elders and with a three-fourths vote of the members at any regular or special business meeting of the members.

### **Article 8 - Meetings**

#### Section 1 – Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the elders determine.

#### Section 2 – Members' Business Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in a spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There shall be a members' business meeting at least twice a year, at a time set by the elders.

The moderator designated by the elders shall preside at all members' business meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

The elders shall delegate a member to record meeting minutes for all member business meetings in the absence of the secretary.

A quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present.

A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' business meeting no more than three months and no less than one month prior to the start of the fiscal year.

At any regular or special members' business meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled/approved as needed.

Special members' business meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of ten percent of the membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at a worship service of the church at least two weeks prior to the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request. Discussion and business conducted at a special members' business meeting is restricted to the topic for which it was called.

Under special circumstances, the elders may deem it necessary to conduct member business meetings virtually. When it is impractical or impossible due to a natural disaster, pandemic, or other circumstances to conduct an in-person meeting, the elders may approve any one or more members to participate in a members' business meeting through the use of any means of communication by which all members may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. In the event such a meeting is approved, the elders shall set the parameters for the means and conduct of the meeting.

## **Article 9 – Elders & Other Positions**

### Section 1 – Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are pastors/elders and deacons. In addition, our church, under these bylaws and the church Articles of Incorporation, recognizes corporate officers as the legal officers of the church. All lay officers must be active members of this church for at least two years prior to assuming their responsibilities. Former members who return in good standing may petition the elders for an exception to this policy.

### Section 2 – Pastors/Elders

The church shall strive for at least five elders consisting of paid and non-paid elders, with the non-paid elders always holding the majority. All elders must satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in Acts 20:28-35; 1 Timothy 3: 1-7; Titus 1: 6-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. A majority of the active eldership shall be composed of church members not in the regular pay of the church, and no elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

The elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church in accordance with the Word of God. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1-6 and 1 Peter

5: 1–4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.

The church shall recognize called, gifted, and qualified men willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with provisions on election in the bylaws. The term of office for an elder, other than the staff elders, is three years. An elder, other than staff elders, may serve for two consecutive three-year terms, and cannot be re-elected to serve again as an elder without a one year absence from service. The members should receive these men as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders (Num 8: 19, Eph 4: 7-13). Elders should see themselves as servants of the church, not lording it over those entrusted to them but being examples to the congregation (1 Pet 5: 3).

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed must express such concern to the elders, and the elders shall determine if the matter needs to be brought before 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: 19–20. Any elder may be dismissed by a three-fourths vote of the members present at any members’ business meeting of the church after these actions are taken. Pending action of the membership on the dismissal of an elder, an elder may be suspended from his duties by the action of the elders.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of believer’s baptism by immersion and the Lord’s Supper, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, promote growth in Christ-like maturity, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, mobilize the church for world missions, manage the budget, and care for/provide counseling to the members. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

The elders may establish ministry positions or committees representative of the body to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities (for example, committees dealing with finances, personnel, or long-range planning). The elders may also propose new paid staff positions. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. The elders may give authority to the staff elders to define job descriptions, hire, manage and terminate additional staff positions. This responsibility may be delegated to another staff member. The elders shall elect annually a chairman of elders’ meetings and shall also designate one of their number to serve as moderator of members’ business meetings. Elder meetings will be held regularly.

### Section 3 – The Senior Pastor

The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2 above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching. The senior pastor will be considered “first among equals” in the council of elders, charged with the primary teaching role in

the church, and responsible for casting vision for the mission and ministries of the church.

He shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 9, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 10, Section 3.

He shall have charge of the preaching and teaching ministry of the church, administer the ordinances of believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the bylaws.

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for either a permanent or defined period of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the elders shall assume the ultimate responsibility for his duties, any of which may be delegated to another pastor.

#### Section 4 – Other Pastors

The church may call additional pastors/elders whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate.

An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2 above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry for which he is gifted.

His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 9, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 10, Section 3.

He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the bylaws, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the elders.

#### Section 5 – Support Staff

The elders may hire additional support staff to assist with pastoral ministry or administration. The elders shall define the responsibilities for additional staff positions. On a case-by-case basis, the hiring of additional staff may be delegated after the elders have defined the responsibilities for the additional staff position. The funding for paid support staff positions must be approved by the membership.

#### Section 6 – Deacons

The qualifications for the office of deacon are described in 1 Timothy 3: 8-13. The church shall recognize qualified members who are giving themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. The term of office for a deacon is three years. A deacon may serve for two consecutive three-year terms, and cannot be re-elected to serve again as a deacon without a one year absence from service. The deacons shall perform duties assigned by the elders in areas of service such as member care, finances, grounds, facilities, and church ministries. All deacons must be members of this church for a minimum of two (2) years prior to assuming their responsibilities. Deacons are elected accorded to Article 10, Section 2. Deacon meetings will be held regularly.

Upon recommendation by the elders, any deacon may be dismissed by a three-fourths vote of the members present at any members' business meeting of the church

after these actions are taken. Pending action of the membership on the dismissal of a deacon, a deacon may be suspended from his duties by the action of the elders.

#### Section 7 – Corporate Officers

The church shall elect four corporate officers, recommended by the elders, to serve as legal officers of the church for three-year terms. Corporate officers are elected accorded to Article 10, Section 2. A corporate officer may serve for two consecutive three-year terms, and cannot be re-elected to serve again as a corporate officer without a one year absence from service. The roles of the Corporate Officers shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Upon specific vote of the membership authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, or transfer any real property. When the signatures of corporate officers are required, at least two shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of real property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters. While the descriptions of corporate officers are written in the masculine, these positions may be filled by either a man or a woman.

*President.* Under the direction of the elders, the President shall in general supervise the business affairs of the corporation. The president may sign, with the Secretary or any other proper officer of the corporation authorized by the Board of Elders, any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments which the Board has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Board of Elders or by these bylaws or by statute to some other officer or agent of the corporation; and in general shall perform all duties incident to the office of President and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Elders from time to time.

*Vice President.* In the absence of the President or in the event of his inability or refusal to act, the Vice President shall perform the duties of the President, and when so acting, shall have all powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President. The Vice President shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the President or by the elders.

*Treasurer.* The Treasurer shall oversee the financial matters of the church in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws and in general perform all the duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the elders.

*Secretary.* The Secretary shall ensure the proper keeping of minutes of the church business meetings and any other meetings as directed by the elders, in one or more books provided for that purpose; see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws or as required by law; be custodian of the corporate records of the corporation and in general perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the elders.

## **Article 10 – Elections**

### Section 1 – Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;

Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;

All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;

The election process shall express a spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Section 2 – Election of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' business meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, and corporate officers shall be presented by the elders at least two weeks prior to the election. The election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The elders shall seek recommendations from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office must express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' business meeting. Nominees will not be accepted from the floor at the time of the vote.

The moderator shall declare elected as elders, deacons, or corporate officers all nominees receiving a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' business meeting. Voting for elders, deacons, and corporate officers shall be conducted by written ballot.

The persons elected shall assume their respective offices at the beginning of the calendar year. If a need or vacancy arises, the elders may hold a special election upon which the person elected will assume office immediately following the election. Officers elected during a special election will serve the office's normal term. If service starts with six months or less in the calendar year, the time in service will not count towards the first year of the office's term.

### Section 3 – Calling of Pastors

In the calling of any man to the position of Senior Pastor or other pastor, a search team shall be formed consisting of 4 elders (at least 2 of whom must be lay elders), and 3 at-large church members. The elders shall seek recommendations from the general membership for the 3 at-large members and shall present the entire search team to the church for vote at a regular or special business meeting of the members. Three-fourths of votes cast are required for approval. The names of the search committee shall be presented to the church two weeks prior to a vote.

Before being asked to affirm the nominee, the church must be given opportunity to assess the gifts of any potential senior pastor or other pastor, and must receive

assurance from the search committee that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as senior pastor or other pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting. The moderator shall declare as elected any man receiving a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' business meeting. Voting for all pastors shall be conducted by written ballot.

### **Article 11 – Indemnification**

The elders and corporate officers shall not be personally liable to WCR for monetary damages arising out of any action, whether by or in the right of the Church or otherwise, for any breach of duty as an elder or corporate officer, except for liability with respect to: (1) acts or omissions that such elder at the time of the breach knew or believed were clearly in conflict with the best interests of the Church, (2) any liability under Sections 55A-8-32 or 55A-8-33 of the Act, (3) any transaction from which such elder derived an improper personal financial benefit, and (4) acts or omissions prior to the date the Articles are effective. Also, as used herein, the term "improper personal benefit" does not include an elder's reasonable compensation or other reasonable incidental benefit for or on account of service as an employee of the Church. If the Act is amended after the date of the Articles to authorize corporate action further eliminating or limiting the personal liability of the elder, then the liability of the elder shall be eliminated or limited to the fullest extent permitted by the Act, as so amended. No amendment or repeal of the provisions of this Article 11 shall apply to or have any effect on the liability or alleged liability of any elder of the Church for or with respect to any act or failure to act on the part of such elder party occurring prior to such amendment or repeal.

It is the policy of the Church to indemnify to the maximum extent permitted by the Act any one or more of the indemnified parties against judgments, penalties, settlements and other liabilities incurred by them in connection with any pending, threatened or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal investigative or administrative and against reasonable costs and expenses (including attorneys' fees) in connection with any such proceeding, where liabilities and litigation expenses were incurred incident to the good faith performance of their duties. As used herein, the term "indemnified parties" shall mean the elders, deacons, officers, and members of the pastoral staff as well as key employees as listed in a duly authorized resolution adopted by either the elders or the Church. The elders may include others as "indemnified parties" if they deem it necessary. The Church may advance expenses in connection with any proceeding to any such person in accordance with applicable law. The use of funds of the Church for indemnification or for purchase and maintenance of insurance for the benefit of the indemnified parties shall be deemed a proper expense of the Church.

## **Article 12 – 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 (Matt 18: 15–20, 1 Cor 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves 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 and the avoidance of suits of law or equity to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or secular and whether individuals or corporate entities. The elders shall adopt policies and procedures as needed to effect these requirements and aspirations.

## **Article 13 – Amendments**

Upon recommendation by the elders these bylaws may be amended by three-quarters of the votes cast at the members' business meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at a members' meeting, and shall have been announced at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The revised version of these bylaws shall be made available to all church members.

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<sup>i</sup> Statement borrowed from New Hope Church in Oahu, Hawaii.