Westover Church

Constitution, By-Laws and History

2025 Update



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Constitution and By-Laws

Westover Church

Revised by the Session – Month Day, 2025

Introduction

The history of Westover Church is rich with the evidence of God's favor and blessing on His people and our church and to many around the world through them. A record of this history will be appended to every printing of this constitution for public dissemination and will be maintained by the staff and /or volunteers and approved by the currently seated session. The history will be reviewed at least every five years for updating.

Preamble

We, the members of Westover Church of Greensboro, North Carolina, in order to win men, women, and children to Christ, to spread the Gospel of the grace of God to the ends of the earth, to edify believers in the faith, and to deepen their knowledge of Christ, for ourselves and for others who shall hereafter become members of Westover Church, do ordain and establish this Constitution and the By-laws thereto to which we, as members thereof, agree and voluntarily submit ourselves. This document supersedes all bases of church government heretofore enacted and shall be the basis of government from its adoption forward, subject to amendments as provided therefore.



Part 1: Constitution

Article 1.1 – Church Name

This organization shall be known as Westover Church by which name it is incorporated under the laws of the State of North Carolina, and hereinafter designated "Church." The terms "congregation" and "membership" are herein used interchangeably and designate the corporate body of all members of the Church on active roll.

ARTICLE 1.2 – Articles of Faith

Our position in relation to the doctrines of the Christian faith is as follows:

GOD

We believe in the only¹ true God² eternally existing in three persons as the Incomprehensible Trinity³ - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit⁴ - each possessing divine perfection and worthy of precisely the same homage and obedience⁵; He, as Creator⁶ and sovereign ruler⁷ of the universe, is righteous in all His ways⁸ and holy in all His works.

Mark 12:29
 Isaiah 45:22
 John 15:26
 Matthew 28:19

5. Revelation 4:11
 6. John 1:3
 7. Hebrews 1:1-3
 8. Deuteronomy 32:4



THE BIBLE

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament in their entirety to be the Word of God¹ given by inspiration of God², in the sense that the Holy Spirit gave the very words of the sacred writings to holy men of old³ and that His Divine inspiration extends fully to all parts of these writings, historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic⁴. We further believe that the Scriptures, from first to last, center about our Lord Jesus Christ⁵, His person and work, His first and second coming; and therefore every portion of both the Old and New Testament was ordained of God for our instruction.

We fully accept the Scriptures as being inerrant in the original writings, essentially accurate as preserved⁶ and the only infallible rule of faith and life⁷.

1. 1 Thessalonians 2:13
 2. 2 Timothy 3:16
 3. 2 Peter 1:19-21
 4. 1 Corinthians 2:13

5. Luke 24:27 6. Luke 21:33 7. Psalm 119:105

SIN AND THE HUMAN RACE

We believe that mankind was directly created¹ by God in His own image², holy and upright; that through the historic fall into sin, we all came under God's condemnation³, and that in consequence the whole human race is dead in trespasses and sins⁴ and subject to its judgment: death and hell. We believe that this total depravity⁵ extends to every child of Adam because we are born into this world with a sinful nature, which possesses no spark of divine life. We further believe that without God's provision for salvation in His Son⁶, Jesus Christ, no one can enter the Kingdom of God⁷, that no degree of reformation, no educational attainment, no cultural or philanthropic achievement, no religious ordinance can help a sinner toward the Kingdom⁸.

Genesis 2:7
 Genesis 1:26
 Romans 5:12
 Ephesians 2:1

5. Romans 3:10-12 6. John 3:18 7. John 3:5 8. Isaiah 64:6



JESUS CHRIST

We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God¹, who became man², without ceasing to be God³, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit⁴ and born of the Virgin Mary, and that He lived a sinless⁵ life that He might reveal God. We believe He accomplished our redemption through His death on the Cross as a substitutionary sacrifice and full propitiation for our sins⁶, and that our redemption is made sure to us by His literal, bodily resurrection from among the dead⁷. We further believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven, exalted at the right hand of God, where as the High Priest for His people, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor and Advocate⁸.

- 1. John 1:1-2 2. John 1:14 3. Philippians 2:6-8 4. Luke 1:35
- 5. Hebrews 4:15
 6. Romans 3:24-25
 7. 1 Peter 1:3-5
 8. Hebrews 4:14-16

SALVATION

We believe that salvation from sin is a free gift offered by God through His grace¹ and received by personal repentance from sin and by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ² whose precious blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins, and that no repentance or penance, no resolution or sincere effort, no membership, nor submission to, any Church or its rules or regulations, can in the very least add to the value of that precious blood or to the merit of the redemptive work wrought on Calvary³.

We further believe that it is the privilege of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ⁴ to be assured of their salvation from the time of their conversion⁵ and that this confidence is based wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word⁶.

Ephesians 2:8-9
 John 1:12
 1 Peter 1:18-23

4. 1 John 5:10-13
 5. Romans 8:1
 6. Romans 8:38-39



HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person who convicts individuals of sin¹ and who alone enables them to place genuine trust in Jesus Christ² baptizing them into the body of Christ at the moment of saving faith³, indwelling them for godly living, and forever sealing them to glory⁴. We further believe this constitutes the only baptism by the Holy Spirit and is not evidenced by any special gifts such as tongues.

We also believe that it is the duty of every believer to be filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit⁵, as commanded in the Scriptures, thereby bearing the fruit of the Spirit⁶ and exercising such gifts as the Spirit may grant in His sovereign will⁷.

John 16:7-11
 John 3:5-6
 1 Corinthians 12:12-14
 Ephesians 1:13-14

5. Ephesians 5:18
 6. Galatians 5:22-23
 7. 1 Corinthians 12:4-12

CHRISTIAN LIFE

We believe that Christians are called with a holy calling to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit¹. Because they have become new creatures in Christ Jesus² and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit³, we believe they should recognize that they are pilgrims in this world⁴, with a mission to proclaim Christ, and to live lives consistent with their Christian testimony⁵.

1. Romans 8:5-9 2. 2 Corinthians 5:17 3. John 14:16-17 4. Colossians 3:1-3 5. Peter 1:14-16

RESPONSIBILITY OF BELIEVERS

We believe that God has appointed prayer¹, Bible reading², worship³, fellowship⁴, serving⁵, giving⁶, and witnessing⁷ as means of grace and growth for His children⁸. We further believe that, as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will give account to Him⁹.

James 5:16
 Colossians 3:16
 John 4:24
 Hebrews 10:24-25
 Ephesians 4:11, 12

6. Malachi 3:10
 7. Acts 1:8
 8. 2 Peter 3:18
 9. 2 Corinthians 5:10



THE CHURCH

We believe that the Holy Spirit incorporates all true believers into the Church¹, which is Christ's body², and that as members of His body, they are to manifest love for each other³, and to represent Him and spread His Gospel throughout the world⁴. We further believe that, as thus being members one of another⁵, we are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace⁶, loving one another with a true heart fervently⁷.

Ephesians 2:18-22
 Colossians 1:17-24
 1 Corinthians 12:12-18
 Mark 16:15

5. Ephesians 4:25
 6. Ephesians 4:3
 7. 1 Peter 1:22

ORDINANCES

We believe that the ordinances of Water Baptism¹ of believers and the Lord's Supper² are of perpetual obligation in the Church. Westover practices baptism by immersion (except for health reasons). However, we recognize both immersion and affusion (pouring or sprinkling) as valid forms of Believers Baptism for those who have already been baptized.

Matthew 28:19
 1 Corinthians 11:23-34

DEDICATION OF INFANTS

We believe that God honors the sincere desire of parents to dedicate their children to Him, and provision shall be made for such public dedication¹ of infants of members. Also, the Pastors are authorized to dedicate infants of non-member believers².

1. 1 Samuel 1:28 2. Psalm 103:17



ANGELS AND DEMONS

We believe in the personal existence of unseen spirits in the world¹ who contend for the souls of men and women², some furthering³ and others, under Satan⁴ opposing the purposes of God⁵.

Colossians 1:16
 1 Peter 5:8
 Hebrews 1:7

4. 2 Corinthians 11:14 5. Revelation 12:9-12

THE SECOND COMING

We believe in the personal, bodily return¹ of Jesus Christ to earth². While the exact timing of the second coming is known only to God the Father³, it will be sudden and obvious⁴, announced audibly⁵ and visible to all⁶. It could occur at any moment⁷. True believers⁸, who comprise His church⁹, both the living and dead, will be caught up to meet Him¹⁰ in bodies like His¹¹ and will remain ever with Him¹². His coming will initiate just judgments on all humanity¹³. He will establish His personal reign on earth¹⁴, followed by His eternal kingdom in a new heaven and earth¹⁵. In light of these realities, believers in Christ should be encouraged¹⁶, alert¹⁷, and cultivating a life of hope¹⁸, holiness¹⁹, and service²⁰ while awaiting Him.

In addition to the clear essentials above, the Bible describes certain details of the events associated with Christ's return. We acknowledge, together with many who hold to the authority of Scripture, that several interpretations regarding the exact sequence and timing of those events are possible.

1. Acts 1:11	11. Philippians 3:20-21
2. Zechariah 14:4	12. 1 Thessalonians 4:17
3. Matthew 24:36-42, Mark 13:32	13. Matthew 25: 31-34, Revelation 20:11-15, 2 Peter
	3:7, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 1
	Corinthians 4:5
4. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, Matthew 24:2	7 14. Revelation 20: 4-8a
5. 1 Thessalonians 4:16	15. Revelation 21:1-6
6. Matthew 24:30, Revelation 1:7	16. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 16-17
7. Matthew 24:36-39, 1 Thessalonians	17. Matthew 24:42; Matthew 25:13; Luke 12:40; 2
5:1-2, Revelation 22:7	Timothy 4:1-5; 2 Peter 3:17
8. Romans 10:9	18. Matthew 25:29; Romans 8:23-25; 1 Peter 1:13; 1
	Thessalonians 2:19; 1 John 3:2-3
9. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13	19. 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 Timothy 4:8; 1 John 2:28-29;
	1 John 3:2-3; 2 Peter 3:10-14;
10. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17	20. Matthew 25:21; 1 John 2:28-29; 1 Corinthians
	15:58; 1 Timothy 4:1-5



HEAVEN AND HELL

We believe in the bodily resurrection¹ and everlasting blessedness of believers² and in the bodily resurrection of unbelievers to final judgment and everlasting punishment³. By this we mean that we believe that the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do at death immediately pass into His Presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His second coming⁴.

Further, we believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery⁵ until the final judgment⁶, when soul and body shall be united and cast into the lake of fire to be separated from God and punished forever⁷.

1. 1 Corinthians 15:12-21
 2. 2 Corinthians 5:1
 3. John 5:29
 4. 2 Corinthians 5:8

5. Luke 16:19-31
 6. Revelation 20:11-15
 7. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9



ARTICLE 1.3 – Standards of the Christian Life

Section 1 – Lordship, Love, and Obedience to God's Word

We believe that the Scriptures enjoin a life in which Christians give witness to their union with Christ by manifesting the fruit of the indwelling Spirit in their lives¹.

We believe that the Christian life should be characterized by love for and obedience to God's Word; love toward all people (even those considered to be enemies); humility, honesty, fidelity, and integrity in all family, social, business, and professional relationships².

We believe that Christians will be increasingly sensitive to the sins of their own hearts and will yield to Christ as Lord of their lives for victory over pride, self-seeking, jealousy, a critical spirit, bitterness, and all other characteristics of the old nature³. We believe that, as Christians permit God to work in their hearts, they will separate themselves from those things which tend to hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives and which impair the capacities of body, mind or spirit, realizing these are gifts of God for which they are accountable, and which are to be separated unto Him for His purposes⁴. Moreover, we believe that Christians should desire to mature in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and become increasingly sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as to any practices which hinder their relationship with Christ. As Christians are made aware of such, they will, regardless of the standards of others, discontinue such practices. Further, Christians realize that "For none of us lives for ourselves alone⁵," and they will gladly forego anything which causes a brother or sister to stumble⁶.

While it is understood that being born again through faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and acceptance of the foregoing Articles of Faith are the basis for membership in the Westover Church, we recommend to all members and any who are seeking membership to prayerfully seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit concerning their attitude toward the Scriptural standards of the Christian life as outlined in this statement.

1. Galatians 5:22-23	4. Romans 12:1-2
2. Philippians 1:9-11	5. Romans 14:7-8
3. Romans 6:11-13	6. Romans 14:13



Section 2 – Biblical Marriage

Marriage is an important element of Christian living on which the Church's position must be clear. God designed marriage as a lifelong¹ covenant between one man and one woman, male and female as God created them in the beginning². Marriage is intended to be a picture of oneness, not only in physical intimacy but also in mutual love and respect that reflects Christ's relationship with the church³. In marriage, spouses are bound together in covenant with God, and, when troubles arise, it is always God's desire that they pursue repentance and restoration⁴. The Bible portrays marriage as sacred and strongly condemns marital unfaithfulness of any kind⁵. But even in the case of unfaithfulness or divorce, God's grace gives hope to the believer⁶. People of any marital status (single, married, divorced, separated) are welcome at Westover church.

Scripture admonishes believers not to marry unbelievers⁷. However, believers already so married should not seek separation but live and pray for their spouse's coming to faith in Christ⁸.

A married couple as defined above forms a nuclear family, whether they have children or not. In a family unit, each member (husband, wife, child) is admonished to live out certain biblically defined roles as the family grows in love, following Christ together⁹.

Marriage is a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman. God graciously provides believers in Christ with instruction and enablement to fulfill that commitment. God views marriage very seriously, clearly and repeatedly stating in His word that forgiveness and reconciliation, not divorce and remarriage, are to be the norm for couples. "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matthew 19:6b)¹⁰

In the Scriptures, divorce is permitted in only two situations:

- A. When a spouse has been sexually unfaithful¹¹
- B. When an unbelieving spouse has deserted his or her believing spouse.8
 - Unbelieving means a lack of credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior¹² or without demonstrable evidence¹³ of a life being transformed by the Holy Spirit¹⁴.
 - Desertion means the unbelieving spouse takes steps, including physical abandonment, that make reconciliation impossible.



Physical abuse warrants separation for reasons of safety. A pattern of physical abuse constitutes desertion¹⁵. It contradicts the established values of the relationship between husband and wife in which husbands are to love their wives, and wives are to respect/honor their husbands¹⁶. Couples in relationships involving abuse need assistance and counsel to navigate this difficult situation.

Remarriage is permitted only when:

- the previously married spouse has passed away¹⁷
- divorce is permitted in one of the two situations above (A and/or B)

A believer who remarries may do so only "...in the Lord", i.e. a believer may only marry another believer¹⁸.

Apart from the situations noted above, God views divorce and remarriage as adultery¹⁹. Nevertheless, those who have divorced and remarried should not seek to undo that marriage but are admonished to remain as they are and live their marriage as God intended for His glory and purposes²⁰.

Consistent with any Biblical new-beginning, remarriage must be preceded by repentance and confession of any wrongdoing before God and people affected²¹.

Couples experiencing marital troubles should seek godly counsel, especially if considering separation or divorce. Those considering remarriage, including believers divorced prior to coming to faith in Christ and cases in which reconciliation between two believers appears impossible, should seek counsel as well. Westover Church is committed to come alongside people of any marital status (single, married, divorced, separated), walk with them in God's compassion and grace, and help them understand and live out the life-changing truth of the Scriptures.

Westover staff, pastors, elders, and the marriage ministry are resource contacts to access counsel.

The pastors of the Church may officiate at, and Church property be used only for weddings consistent with the principles stated above.



- 1. Matthew 19:6; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, 27a, 39; Romans 7:2-3
- 2. Genesis 1:27; 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6
- 3. Genesis 2:18-23; Ephesians 5:31-33
- 4. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 19:3-9
- 5. Malachi 2:1-16, Hebrews 13:4, Matthew 5:27-32
- 6. Hebrews 4:14-16, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- 7. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- 8. 1 Corinthians 7:12-16
- 9. Ephesians 5:22-6:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7, 1 Timothy 5:3-8
- 10. Matthew 5:23-25, Matthew 18:21-35, Ephesians 4:32, Hebrews 12:15
- 11. Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:9
- 12. Romans 10:8-11
- 13. Galatians 5:22-23
- 14. 1 Timothy 5:8, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13
- 15. 1 Corinthians 7:15b
- 16. Ephesians 5:22,25,33
- 17. 1 Corinthians 7:39, Romans 7:2-3
- 18. 2 Corinthians 6:14, 1 Corinthians 7:39
- 19. Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:3-9, Mark 10:5-12, Luke 16:18, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11
- 20. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, 17
- 21. 1 John 1:9, James 5:16, Hebrews 12:15-16



Section 3 – Sanctity of Life

We believe that all human life is sacred because God created each person in His image and likeness^{1,2}. This sacredness begins at the moment of conception, and every human life, born or pre-born, is a precious gift from God, deserving of dignity, care, and protection^{3,4}.

The value of human life is not diminished by age, health, ability, or circumstance, and as followers of Christ, we are called to honor and protect life at every stage^{5,6}. We also affirm the importance of helping others understand the unique and God-given worth of every person.

Since all people are image-bearers of our Creator, any act that intentionally and prematurely ends an innocent life—including abortion, infanticide or medically-assisted death—is contrary to God's will and commandments^{7,8}. We recognize that in a fallen world, some pregnancies tragically end due to miscarriage or life-threatening complications and many people face difficult, end-of-life choices. In such cases, we recognize the need for wisdom, compassion, and medical care that seeks to affirm the value of life.

At the same time, we recognize that our culture diminishes the value of life. Therefore, we commit to demonstrating Christ's love in practical ways to individuals and families that are or have been involved in such circumstances. We recognize that the church must be a place of healing, forgiveness, and restoration, showing compassion to all who confess their sins and seek His mercy^{9,10}. We commit to walking alongside those who have experienced loss or trauma, offering prayer and the hope of Christ's healing and grace. By doing so, we stand as a witness to the sacredness of all human life and proclaim God's truth and grace to a world in need¹¹.

- Genesis 1:27
 Psalm 139:13-16
 Jeremiah 1:5
 Isaiah 49:1
 Proverbs 24:11-12
 Matthew 25:40
- 7. Genesis 9:5-7
 8. Exodus 20:13
 9. 1 John 1:9
 10. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
 11. John 1:14



ARTICLE 1.4 Independent Status

This Church, while desiring to cooperate with all groups of true believers in furthering the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, is and shall remain free of any and all denominational and organizational affiliation that would exercise any jurisdiction over it.

ARTICLE 1.5 Government

The government of the Church shall be Presbyterian in form, with ultimate authority and responsibility vested in the on-session elders, acting as the Session, being duly elected by the congregation.

Also, for administration of fiscal matters and maintenance of the Church's real property, the congregation shall elect Deacons.

For the purposes of legal status, the members of the Church shall constitute the Corporation, whose officers shall be elected annually by the Session.

ARTICLE 1.6 Rights of the Church

The Corporation of the Church, through its duly elected officers, shall have sole title to its real property, and shall be sole owner of any equity it may have in any real property.

ARTICLE 1.7 Amendments

This Constitution, except **ARTICLE 1.4**, may be amended by the following procedure:

Amendments may originate only in the Session. An amendment may be adopted by the Session only after consideration in at least two regular monthly meetings, of which all ordained elders of the Church, on-session and off-session, shall have been previously and duly notified in writing, including the text of the proposed amendment. Adoption of amendments shall require a favorable vote by three-fourths of the on-session and off-session elders present at the second meeting.



PART 2: BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 2.1 Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications

Membership is open only to those who have personally received Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, have given satisfactory evidence of it in a changed life, been baptized as believers, and are at least 17 years old.

John 1:12 Romans 10:9-10 Mark 16:1 Acts 2:38

Section 2 – Procedure

After a qualified person has consistently attended the regular services of the Church for a reasonable time, the candidate will enroll in a Membership Class to become acquainted with the Articles of Faith, policies, program, mission, and government of the Church. Upon completion of the course, formal application for membership shall be made to a Pastor or the Clerk of Session, shall be dated and signed by the applicant, and shall, at a minimum, include the following covenant:

"Having received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and acknowledging Him as Lord, and having received instruction concerning the policies, doctrinal position, program, mission and government of the Church, and desiring to join this community of believers in a formal way, I hereby make application for membership in Westover Church.

"I am willing to make a public profession of my faith in Jesus Christ, and agree to be interviewed by two elders as a condition of reception into membership.

"I present myself and all that I have to the service of God, to covenant with and fully pursue Him as a follower of His Son, Jesus Christ as a part of the community of believers of Westover Church.

"Having read and understood the Articles of Faith and Constitution of Westover Church, I agree to them without reservation.



"I further covenant to align myself under and submit to the spiritual leadership of Westover Church (elders and pastoral leadership), and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church.

"I further agree to live as a holy and humble Christian in regular attendance to the services of public worship of this Church, to give regularly of my means and talents for its support, to keep holy the Lord's Day (Exodus 20:8-11 & Romans 14:5-6), to maintain private and family prayer, to give diligent heed to the Word of God, and to yield my life to the indwelling Christ that the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) may be manifest to me.

"If at any time I find myself out of harmony with the Articles of Faith, or if my conduct is called into question by the elders of the Church, I hereby agree to submit the differences or charges to the Session. If it be found that I am unwilling to settle the differences on Scriptural grounds (Matthew 18:15-17), I hereby authorize the Session to drop my name from the membership roll.

"Our elders and pastors take seriously their responsibility to care for you and your family. As a member of Westover Church, if at any time I should consider leaving the membership, I will endeavor to communicate with appropriate Westover representatives about my decision and any relevant concerns."

After completing a formal application, each candidate will meet with two elders for an interview for the purpose of sharing their testimony. Upon approval by the Session, candidates are accepted into membership, and at a subsequent Sunday service are publicly received.

Exceptions to the above procedure for receiving members may be made by the Session only in specific cases, such as candidates who are physically incapacitated and full-time Christian workers absent on duty.

It is our desire that regular attenders join our community through membership. Westover elders and pastors desire to care for the body of Westover as an essential aspect of their leadership. Our leaders are to make every effort as mandated by scripture to know our members and, as well as possible, our regular attenders. (Proverbs 27:23; John 10:3; Acts 20:28-29; 1 Peter 5:2-4). For those who have come forward in membership, we accomplish this through getting to know them during the membership process, maintaining their contact information, noting their involvement/activities within the church when possible, and in regular contacts with church representatives (elders, pastors, deacons and staff, and lay leaders).



Section 3 – Change of membership status

At times a member may decide to leave our body for the following reasons

- Relocation out of the area
- Affiliation with another church
- Other reasons

The member should notify the church office that they are leaving and if possible we would like to have feedback as to the reasons for leaving so that it could aid our ministry. We desire to keep our records current and our communication effective.

Once the church is notified, the member will be designated as a previous or former member (non-voting).

If a member has not been involved in the regular ministries of the church for a year and has failed to notify the church, then the member will be contacted by a pastor or elder concerning this lack of interest and if confirmed then the member will be moved to a status of previous or former member. In order to keep the membership records current, this process should be done yearly.

Section 4 – Involuntary termination of membership

A member may be involuntarily dismissed from membership by the Session if it becomes known that they express false or heretical doctrines (Galatians 1:8-9) or their life demonstrates a significant contradiction to their covenant of membership as set forth in Section 2 of this Article, pertaining to the Articles of Faith. In this case, this member shall agree to discuss their positions with representatives of elders and/or pastors in a Matthew 18:15-17 process for grace-filled counseling. With an unsatisfactory resolution, this member may be subject to dismissal from membership – and in very rare, typically dangerous situations -- from association with the congregation. The individual will be designated as a former or previous member (dismissed) in the records.



Section 5 – Readmission to membership of former members

Should a former member who was active and in good standing desire to re-affiliate with the church, he or she should notify the church and arrange to have a discussion with a pastor or elder prior to restoration of membership. Former members in good standing may do this without taking a class designed for new members.

Should a former member who was terminated from membership as in Section 4 experience spiritual restoration and desire renewed fellowship with the Church, he or she may make a request to a pastor or an elder. Upon favorable consideration by the session, the dismissed member will meet with the session and upon their approval be reinstated into membership in a manner similar to receiving new members.

Section 6 – Regular attenders (non-members)

Definition: For regular attenders who have not yet joined the church, but wish to be affiliated with us, church representatives will work to include them in communications and seek to know them as well as possible and encourage them to begin the membership process.

Approval for leadership: A member of Westover has covenanted with us regarding the beliefs of this church and has agreed that their services to this community will be in keeping with the direction and authority of its leadership. In some cases, however, there may be lay leaders at Westover who perform significant duties for our congregation who are not yet members. It could be that they are waiting to take a membership class in the future or might not be ready to join for other reasons. If they are in a leadership or teaching capacity serving our body, they need to assent in writing to our Articles of Faith and pledge to be under the authority of our elders and pastors in regard to the expression of their faith and services provided. They can then be noted in our records as an attender approved for leadership other than those roles where membership is required such as elder or deacon.



ARTICLE 2.2 The Lead Pastor

Section 1 – Definition

The Lead Pastor of this Church shall be an ordained man, duly called by the membership and installed by due process.

Section 2 – Qualifications

The qualifications of the Lead Pastor are enjoined in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and others), and he shall be set apart to "labor in the Word and in doctrine" (1 Timothy 5:17 and Acts 20:28). Further, he shall fully and conscientiously subscribe to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church.

In addition, he must have an education which scholastically qualifies him to accurately understand, interpret and apply the scriptures in proclaiming the Gospel and maturing the Body of Christ.

Further, his private and family life must be exemplary, thereby adorning his profession in the Gospel. He must be a man zealous and industrious in the ministry, kind and loving toward his flock, compassionate and concerned for the lost, and helpful and cooperative with the officers of the Church, being in full accord with the government of the Church.

Section 3 – Call and tenure

When a lead pastor needs to be called, the Session shall act promptly to select a Search Committee, whose function shall be to seek a new Lead Pastor. This committee shall be composed of three (3) elders (on-session or off-session) selected by the Session who shall be responsible for calling and organizing the committee, two (2) deacons (active or inactive) selected by the Deacons and two (2) members representing the congregation at large, chosen by the three (3) named elders and two (2) named deacons. This full committee shall meet promptly to elect its Chairman and Secretary.

The Search Committee shall act prayerfully and tactfully to find a potential Lead Pastor. When a candidate comes under serious consideration, some members of the committee shall make an onsite visit and hear the potential Lead Pastor speak in his current church or place of ministry. (Only in very extraordinary circumstances that prevent an onsite visit may this be done by some remote method.) When the committee approves a candidate by at least 2/3 majority of all committee members, they shall make their recommendation to the On-Session Elders in a regular or duly called meeting. Session approval of such a recommendation shall require



favorable votes by at least 2/3 of On-Session elders present at the meeting. The Session shall then call a special congregational meeting for the purpose of extending a pastoral call to the recommended man. Notice of such a congregational meeting shall be made in writing at a Sunday service at least seven (7) days before the meeting and may be made in such additional means as determined in the sole discretion of the Session.

In acting on the recommendation of a pastoral call, an affirmative vote by at least 2/3 of all members present and voting shall be required to approve such a call. Upon such a favorable vote, the congregation thereby delegates and empowers the Session to extend the call.

Section 4 – Office of the Lead Pastor

The office of Lead Pastor is first in the Church, both in dignity and usefulness, his different names expressing his various duties: bishop as overseer of the flock, pastor as feeding the flock, minister of Jesus Christ, elder as God's ambassador, steward as administrator of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. While laymen of the Church will exercise responsible leadership, upon the Lead Pastor rests the responsibility of ministering the Word in the church, also providing spiritual and organizational leadership. Being licensed and ordained, he will administer the ordinances of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and will perform marriages and funerals.

The Lead Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Church, an ex-officio member of all committees of the Session, Deacons, and may be the Moderator of the Session and congregational meetings.



Section 5 – Terminating a Lead Pastor's services

The services of the *Lead* Pastor may be terminated in one of *two* ways:

- 1. Upon his voluntary resignation made to the Session.
- 2. By request by the Session that he submit his resignation.

In the case of a voluntary resignation, the *Lead* Pastor shall do so in writing to the Session, giving at least 30 days' notice. The Session shall act upon such a resignation and upon acceptance of same, shall call for a congregational meeting to inform the Church.

The Session may for reasons it deems valid and appropriate request the *Lead* Pastor to resign. Session approval of such a recommendation shall require favorable votes by at least 2/3 of all On-Session elders. The *Lead* Pastor shall be notified in writing of the reasons for such a request and shall comply. Notification of the congregation shall be made in the same manner as provided for in handling a voluntary resignation.



Article 2.3 Pastoral Staff

Section 1 – Definition

The Lord has given gifts to men called to be Pastors. In this role, they shepherd the body alongside the Session and the Lead Pastor. These men are responsible for different areas of ministry at Westover Church and will lead their respective areas of ministries to support and help achieve the mission and vision. The Pastors will work diligently alongside the Session and the Lead Pastor to help the congregation grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and make disciples of all nations.

Section 2 – Qualifications

The qualifications of the Pastors are enjoined in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and others), and they shall be set apart to "labor in the Word and in doctrine," and the ministry of the church (1 Timothy 5:17 and Acts 20:28). Further, they shall fully and conscientiously subscribe to the Constitution and By-Laws and shall become members of the Church.

In addition, a Pastor must have completed or demonstrate a desire to pursue an education which qualifies him to lead ministry and be a man who is able to accurately understand, interpret and apply the Scriptures in proclaiming the Gospel and helping lead the Body of Christ.

Further, a Pastor's private and family life must be exemplary, thereby adorning his profession in the Gospel. He must be a man zealous and industrious in the ministry, kind and loving toward his flock, compassionate and concerned for the lost, and helpful and cooperative with the officers of the Church, being in full accord with the government of the Church.

Section 3 – Call and Tenure

The call, tenure, duties and all other matters pertaining to such offices shall be subject to the approval of the Session, requiring favorable votes of at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of On-Session elders, and set forth in writing.



ARTICLE 2.4 Ministry Staff (Paid)

Section 1 – Staff

The establishment, qualification, call, tenure, duties and all other matters pertaining to such offices shall be subject to the approval of the Session and set forth in writing.

ARTICLE 2.5 The Session

Section 1 – Composition

Definitions: There are two classifications of elders at Westover Church:

- 1 On Session Those elders currently elected to and serving on the Session.
- 2 Off Session Those elders who are not currently serving on the Session but still meet the qualifications of elder at Westover Church.

Once ordained, elders retain their positions, whether on- or off-session, so long as they continue to meet the qualifications in Article 2.4, Section 2 and affirm the annually presented Elder Covenant.

The Session shall be composed of the on-session elders and the Lead Pastor. The number of onsession elders shall be determined by the Session, but there shall be at least 12 Elders.

Section 2 – Qualifications for Elders

The qualifications for elders are outlined in the Scriptures: 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. In addition, a candidate for elder must be examined and approved by the Session before his name may appear on the ballot, he must wholeheartedly accept the Articles of Faith as contained in the Constitution, he must be a member of the Church in good standing, exemplary in his general Christian conduct, devoted in his attendance and service to the Church, and shall have served Westover Church at least one year as Deacon.

Section 3 – Duties

The Session shall be responsible for the nurture and maintenance of the spiritual welfare of the Church; to provide sound Bible teaching, avenues of fellowship and service, and Christ-centered discipleship; and to supervise the affairs and activities of the Church and any organization that is a part of the Church. Certain powers and responsibilities included as duties of the Session



may be delegated to other organizations or to individuals within the Church, but with the understanding that such powers and responsibilities are always subject to the oversight and discretion of the Session.

The Session also has the right, authority, and duty to examine candidates for the Gospel ministry, and to duly ordain such as they find qualified. Such men need not be members of the Church but shall be those requesting ordination to a ministry not affiliated with an established denomination.

Section 4 – Structure and Tenure

There shall be four (4) classes of on-session elders constituting the Session, each composed of approximately one fourth of the total men elected for four (4) years, per Section 1.

Section 5 – Meetings

The Session shall meet regularly each month, with exception as approved by the Session, and at other times as called by the Lead Pastor, the Moderator, or upon request of two on-session elders. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the on-session elders.

Section 6 – Officers

At the first meeting of the Session following election and installation of a new class of onsession elders, the Session shall elect a Moderator, a Vice Moderator, and a Clerk of Session. These officers shall also serve in their respective capacities at congregational meetings. The Clerk shall be responsible for keeping safely and in good order pertinent records and correspondence, membership records, and all Session-related minutes. In the absence of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator shall be in authority and responsible to call meetings of the Session to provide a continuing, orderly ministry by the Church. In the absence of both Moderator and Vice Moderator, another member of the session may temporarily function in this capacity as determined by the Moderator.

Section 7 – Committees

The Session may establish standing and special committees and determine their composition, function, and term of service.

Unless specifically approved by the Session, no person may serve on a committee to which their spouse has been appointed.



Section 8 – Limitation of Obligations

The Session shall not enter into any outside financial obligation, encumber any Church property, authorize the borrowing of any money, or purchase or sell any real Church property without approval of the congregation. Such approval shall require a favorable vote by 2/3 of the members present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting.

Disposition of real property which has been donated to the Church shall be determined by a majority vote of the Session and does not require a congregational vote.

ARTICLE 2.6 Deacons

Section 1 – Composition

Deacons shall be men duly selected, approved and affirmed. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the Session.

Section 2 – Qualifications

The qualifications of a deacon are outlined in the Scriptures, especially in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, and the same as applying to elders in Article 2.4, Section 2, except that no previous service as deacon shall be required. A candidate for deacon shall be at least 25 years old and a member of the Church at least one (1) year.

Section 3 – Duties

The duties of Deacons shall be to care for the needs of the Body as identified. Deacons shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of all the real property of the Church, as well as certain personnel and fiscal matters as specified by the Session. They and others of the Church whom they may designate shall serve the congregation as ushers at services of the Church.

Section 4 – Structure and tenure

The structure and tenure of Deacons shall be the same as for elders (Article 2.4, Section 4).



Section 5 – Meetings

The Deacons shall meet regularly as needed. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of those elected and serving. A special meeting may be called by a pastor, elder or deacon as may be necessary.

Section 6 – Officers

Each year following the election and installation of a new class, the deacons shall select the leadership considered necessary to fulfill their ministry to the Church body.

ARTICLE 2.7 Joint Meetings

Section 1 – Purpose

Joint meetings shall be for prayer, Church business and fellowship. Clerk of Session will keep minutes of such meetings and furnish a copy of such minutes to the Deacons.

Section 2 – Meetings

The Session and deacons shall convene in a joint meeting during the first month following installation of new officers, at a time set by the Session.

Other such meetings shall be at the call of the Session. Also, Deacons may request the Session to call a joint meeting when they deem it necessary.

Section 3 – Matters requiring action by joint Session/Deacon meeting

- A. The determination of salaries of the Lead Pastor and other persons engaged in the spiritual ministry and worship services of the Church.
- B. Decisions involving a capital expenditure in excess of \$20,000.



ARTICLE 2.8 The Corporation

Section 1 – Officers

There shall be three (3) officers of the Corporation elected, pursuant to the Charter, by the Session at the first meeting in each year: President, Vice President, and Secretary.

Section 2 – Responsibilities of officers

The corporate officers shall perform all necessary legal functions of the Corporation, and keep proper records, legal papers and documents, and the official seal of the Corporation. They shall perform only such functions as directed by the Session or the congregation.

ARTICLE 2.9 Nomination, Election, Ordination, Commissioning and Installation

Section 1 – Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall be composed of the elders whose terms are expiring, the Lead Pastor, and the Clerk of Session. If the Clerk is one of the elders whose term expires, the Session shall name another elder to serve along with the elders whose terms are expiring.

Section 2 – Procedure for nomination

The Nominating Committee, in preparation for election of on-session elders, shall prepare a list of potential candidates, considering the following qualifications:

- A. his consistent Christian walk,
- B. his wholehearted belief in, and acceptance of, the Articles of Faith,
- C. his full endorsement of Church government,
- D. his support and ministry in the body,
- E. his physical ability to serve,
- F. the suitability of his spiritual gifts for the position under consideration,
- G. his alignment with the Scriptural qualifications in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1,
- H. and the qualifications for elder (Article 2.4, Section 2) and deacon (Article 2.5, Section 2).



Along with a list of potential candidates, a recommended ballot shall be presented to the Session by the Nominating Committee. The Session shall prayerfully consider the recommended ballot, making changes, deletions, and additions as it deems fitting. When the Session approves an election ballot of the best qualified candidates, such candidates shall appear before the Session for examination. After sufficient candidates have been examined, the final election ballot shall be approved by at least 2/3 of the elders present and voting at a duly called meeting, and then presented to the congregation in the bulletin one week prior to election.

The above procedure shall be followed by a similar one for nomination of deacons.

Scheduling of nomination and election of officers shall be arranged and approved by the Session so as to be completed prior to the first day of the Church year.

Section 3 – Elections

The ballots for elder and deacon shall contain the names of as many candidates as the Session approves, but not more than twice the number to be elected. Election shall be by a simple majority of the congregation present and voting at a duly called or reconvened congregational meeting during a Sunday morning service or at another appropriate time. If clear majorities are not reached, electing the required number on the first ballot, another ballot shall be prepared listing two (2) candidates for each unfilled office, listed next in order from the first ballot in accordance with this Article, for a run-off election at an appropriate time. Members shall be physically present at the meeting when they cast their ballots, except those who are serving the church as missionaries or have previously asked the Church to designate them as "homebound," may cast their ballots no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting by email or other electronic means.

Section 4 – Records

It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to arrange Session consideration of candidates, prepare and count all ballots, submit a complete record of all voting to the Clerk of Session for the record, and to announce election results to the congregation at the first worship service following election.

Section 5 – Vacancies on the Serving Teams

Should vacancies occur on the Session due to death or resignation, they may be filled by Session appointment for the remainder of the Church year. Officers thus appointed to fill vacancies shall be off-session Westover elders who meet the qualifications in Article 2.4, Section 2.



An elder completing a full term shall not be a candidate for re-election to a consecutive term. An elder completing a partial term shall not be a candidate for re-election to a consecutive term without the approval of the Session. Vacancies occurring on the Session shall be filled by election of elders to serve out such unexpired terms, at the same time as regular election of elders.

Should a Deacon vacancy occur on the due to death, resignation, or a deacon being elected to become an elder, it may be filled by Session appointment for the remainder of the Church year by an inactive deacon who meets the respective qualifications of the role. Election of deacons shall include provision for election of men to serve such unexpired terms. A deacon completing a full or partial term shall not be a candidate for re-election to a consecutive term without the approval of the Session. Vacancies shall be filled by election of deacons to serve out such unexpired terms, at the same time as regular election of deacons.

Section 6 – Ordination and installation

All elders elected for the first time shall be ordained and installed at a Sunday morning service prior to the beginning of the new Church year. Once ordained, elders retain their designation, whether on or off session, so long as they continue to meet the qualifications of an elder. If elders have served previously, they will be installed for on-session terms without ordination.

Section 7 - Failure to hold elections

Should circumstances prevent the holding of a congregational meeting for the election of officers at the regular time, all on-session elders, active deacons and corporate officers shall hold office until elections can be held and their successors are elected.

ARTICLE 2.10 Records

Membership records, minutes of the Session and Boards of Deacons and the Treasurer's books and records are the property of the Church and the responsibility of the Clerk of Session. The corporate officers shall be responsible for safekeeping of the official Church seal and all legal documents. The Session shall approve the methods to appropriately file and store church records and information.



ARTICLE 2.11 Finance

Section 1 – Method of giving

In recognition of God's promised blessing on those who acknowledge their monetary stewardship, the Church shall receive only monies given voluntarily in response to the simple presentation of need. No money shall be solicited or obtained by sales, entertainment, or any like method in order to raise funds for the Church. This restriction on sales applies only to the soliciting of funds and not to the sale of real Church property as provided in Article 2.4, Section 8.

Section 2 – Faith Promise Plan

Inasmuch as giving to the Lord's work at Westover Church is a matter between a believer and the Lord, no solicitation shall be made for pledges. However, since the officers are required to make commitments, they may accept faith promises, in which a giver may so advise what amount he or she is trusting the Lord to give. No records shall be kept of individual faith promises.

Section 3 – Funds

Two permanent funds shall be maintained by the Church: the General Fund and the Missions Fund. Deacons shall administer and appoint deacon(s) to serve as the Treasurer of the General Fund. The Session shall administer the Missions Fund and appoint elder(s) to serve as the Treasurer of the Missions Fund

Other funds may be established as the Session deems necessary, and their treasurers shall be appointed by the Session.

The books of all fund treasurers shall be available for audit at any time as the Session may require. An annual audit of all funds shall be made by an independent professional auditor selected by the Session, and their reports shall be made a part of permanent Session records.

Section 4 – Fiscal responsibilities

All offerings shall be received in accordance with procedures designated by the Session. No records shall be kept of any monetary gifts except what is required by Federal Law.



Section 5 – Reimbursement of Expenses

The Church may charge for reimbursement of expenses. These expenses may include but are not limited to cost of facilities, literature, personnel, equipment, transportation, etc.

ARTICLE 2.12 Congregational Meetings

Section 1 – Duly called

A duly called meeting of the membership shall be broadly communicated through various means at least one week before the meeting. Such a call shall indicate the purpose of the meeting, and only those matters announced therein may be considered. Only the Session may call a meeting of the congregation.

Section 2 – Quorum

A quorum of the membership shall be those present at a duly called meeting. There shall be no voting by proxy.

Section 3 – Nature of business

Matters requiring action by the congregation are the election, ordination, and installation of deacons and elders, calling a Lead Pastor, authorizing the purchase or sale of real property, borrowing money and consideration of other matters for which the Session may call a congregational meeting.

Section 4 – Order

In the conduct of meetings, any parliamentary questions not covered by this Constitution and By-laws shall be handled in accordance with *Roberts Rules of Order*.



ARTICLE 2.13 Church Year

The fiscal Church year shall be from January 1 through December 31.

ARTICLE 2.14 Amendments

Amendments to these By-laws, not in conflict with the foregoing Constitution, may be made in accordance with the same procedure as making amendments to the Constitution. See Article 1.7 of the Constitution.



Part 3: History

Origin and Formation. The church was organized on May 5, 1948 as the Independent Presbyterian Church, Unaffiliated, Inc. of Greensboro. The official name was changed to Westover Presbyterian Church (Unaffiliated) in 1964 and finally to Westover Church in 1994. There were 218 charter members who left another local church over two key issues (1) the importance of the Bible in teaching and preaching and (2) the biblical call to support missionaries worldwide. Worship services were held for two years at the Masonic Temple on West Market Street. The members called their former pastor, Rev. William P. Jones, to be the senior pastor of the new church. They elected a 10-member board of elders and a 10-member board of deacons.

Early History. The church bought land at 908 Westover Terrace and broke ground on October 23, 1949. The initial facility was an education building with a small worship auditorium seating 300. Men and women of the church completed much of the construction by donating their time, resources, and skills to assist in the building project. The first service was held there on the church's second anniversary, May 7, 1950.

The church experienced significant growth in the decade after Billy Graham held a unusually long 6-week crusade in Greensboro in October/November 1951. Missions giving grew from \$3,260 in the first year to nearly \$30,000 by 1959. In 1967, the church started construction of an adjacent building with a 545-seat sanctuary, plus a fellowship hall and offices. This facility was dedicated on February 11, 1968. A time of significant growth followed in the 1970s and 1980s under the pastorates of David Krentel and John Willett. The church held double sessions for worship and Sunday School, assistant pastors were called, and nearby Grimsley High School was used for overflow parking.

The Current Location. When the Westover Terrace location became inadequate for the ministry, the congregation voted in August 1984 to purchase 10 acres of land at 515 Muirs Chapel Road. Under the leadership of Pastor Don Miller, the initial building of a worship center with a capacity of 750, a gymnasium, a kitchen, and an educational/children's space was built on this site. Ground was broken on January 31, 1993. The last worship service at Westover Terrace was held on May 15, 1994. A continuous reading of the whole Bible was begun there on May 18 and completed at the first service in the new facility on May 22.

The church continued to experience significant growth and soon overwhelmed the seating capacity of the new sanctuary. After increasing to 4 Sunday services, the church further expanded space by using the gymnasium as a video café, where the service was streamed to accommodate more people; this also eliminated the need for the evening service.



In the early 2000s, the church voted to expand the facilities with a 220,000 square-foot addition. An extensive building program was begun with the construction of the current facility that had a worship center with the capacity of 2,900 and an atrium; it also included significant additions to the educational space. This project was completed in 2006. The next 15 years saw a number of expansions in ministry, including growth in the AWANA children's ministry, Project Serve trips for high schoolers, an expanded music ministry, and an increased emphasis on local missions.

In August 2021, Pastor Miller retired after 30 years of service. Westover found itself conducting a pastoral search while dealing with the challenges all churches had in maintaining attendance under the severe regulations imposed during the COVID pandemic. Kevin Wilson joined Westover as the new senior pastor in 2022, and we are trusting God for continued blessing on the church as we pursue our vision of developing mature followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Missions Program. A primary reason the church was formed was to support missionaries and to send them to the far corners of the earth. When the church began in 1948, 2 missionary units were supported: Ruth Petty (Costa Rica) and Rev and Mrs. Frank Houston (Brazil). The church gave \$3260 (equal to \$40,700 in 2024) to their support. By 1966 the church supported some 100 missionaries around the world, and in 1973 missions giving first exceeded \$100,000 (equal to \$700,000 in 2024). Since 2013 the annual missions giving has exceeded \$1.5 million and, as of 2024, 148 missionary units (416 people) are supported. The intent from the earliest years was to commit our "first fruits" to reaching the world, so the church devotes all undesignated offerings on the first Sunday to missions. Missions budgeting is based on anonymous Faith Promises received at the annual Fall Global Celebration. Since 1948, Westover has supported missionaries in 106 countries. Over 150 missionaries are Westover members. The generational impact is seen in that children and grandchildren of the missionaries supported by Westover have also been called to the mission field and are supported by the church.

Church Organization. Westover is an independent, evangelical, non-denominational church led by an elder board that is approved by the congregation.



There have been eight senior pastors:

- William P. Jones (1948-1952)
- Merold E. Westphal (1952-1955)
- Frederick W. Evans, Jr. (1955-1964)
- Robert A. Pettit (1965-1971)
- David P. Krentel (1975-1983)
- John W. Willett (1984-1989)
- Donald B. Miller (1991-2021)
- Kevin Wilson (2022-Present)

For a longer history of the church and more information about these pastors, please visit our webpage at www.westoverchurch.com.

