

## Westport Church By-Laws

### Section One: Guarded by Elders

Westport Church is to be led by a plurality of elders who **guard** the beliefs, mission and values of the church. The role of the elder team is to provide oversight, accountability and wisdom for the direction of the church.

Elders are servant leaders who accept the task of managing conflict, making decisions and maintaining truth.

#### **Responsibilities:**

1. Pray for the congregation, staff and the Elder team
2. Protect the congregation from false teaching. (Acts 20:28)
3. Serve and support the Westport community in areas that include peacemaking, teaching and care giving.
4. Monitor the church's spiritual condition and keep the church focused on the mission and vision.
5. Provide supervision, accountability, protection and development for the Lead Pastor
  - Oversee the Lead Pastor's Position Focus Sheet
  - Evaluate the Lead Pastor's skills in these areas:
    - Teaching, Team Leadership, Budget management
  - Establish fair compensation commensurate with his training, experience, tenure and results.
  - Provide an evaluation of the Lead Pastor's job and compensation package no less than annually.
6. Exercise church discipline when necessary. The objective of Christian discipline is to seek correction and restoration rather than punishment.  
(Matt. 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1; Titus 3:10; 1 Corinthians 5)
7. Licensure and Ordination of individuals to ministry
8. Produce and authorize written policies in these areas:
  - Policies governing the board itself
  - Policies governing the Lead Pastor and how he relates to the board
  - Policies that reflect the church's theology and practices
9. Selection of other Elders
10. Provide fiscal accountability through the approval of the Annual Budget and oversight of major capital expenses as needed.

#### **Selection:**

1. Nominated by Elders
2. Affirmed by Congregation
3. Approved with consensus by Elders. **Consensus means...**

- a. Final decisions will be the position of the board, as if there was no difference in opinion
- b. Disagreement is invited privately among elders, but not acceptable publicly.

**Qualifications:**

1. Men who...
  - Agree with the church's values, vision, doctrine and strategy
  - Are great examples as Christ followers
  - Are able to discern truth from error
  - Are already acting like elders
  - Have spouses that support their role as elder
  - Meet the Biblical qualifications
    - 1 Timothy 3:1-7
    - 2 Timothy 2:2
    - 1 Peter 5:1-5
    - Titus 1:5-9
2. A candidate for elder must be a member of Westport Church prior to his selection.
3. In light of the expectations imposed upon elders and their families, we feel it is wise to choose elders who have continued in their first marriages, although divorce is not automatically a disqualification.
4. Candidate should be fully committed to Westport with their financial resources.

**Duration:**

- Annually, Elders will reevaluate their commitment

**Operation:**

1. The Elders will generally meet on a bi-monthly basis, but not less than monthly
2. The chairman will set and guide the agenda
3. All decisions will be kept in the minutes
4. Elders will work together as a unified team in the best interests of the church at large.
5. Elders must trust and respect one another.
6. Elders must commit to attend meetings regularly.
7. Elders must respect confidentiality in sensitive matters.
8. Elders and Lead Pastor will develop and process new initiatives together as we live out the mission and vision of Westport.
9. All decisions will be made by consensus. Removal of an elder requires unanimity among the other elders.

### **Relationships and Authority**

1. Elders will not manage the staff directly
2. Elders, when serving in staff-directed ministries, will be under the authority of that staff person.
3. Hiring and dismissal of Pastoral Staff must have the approval of the Elders.
4. Elders will not directly hire, fire or directly manage any staff except the Lead Pastor.
5. Elders must approve non-budgeted expenditures that exceed \$20,000 or any expenditure that exceeds \$50,000.
6. No individual elder has authority to contractually bind the church verbally or in writing.

### **Information:**

1. The Lead Pastor will keep the board informed of any relevant trends, issues, needs, changes or problems that could affect the ministry positively or negatively.
2. Elders have a right to view any information related to the church at any time, including financials, bank statements, contracts, applications or any other documents.

### **Section Two – Guided by Staff**

1. The staff is responsible for the plans and programs to carry out the vision, mission and strategies of the church. This includes policies and procedures.
2. The Lead Pastor will be ultimately responsible for all personnel, which includes directly hiring and firing.
3. The Lead Pastor will ultimately be responsible for managing the church budget.
4. The Lead Pastor is accountable to the elders for his Position Focus Sheet.
5. The Lead Pastor can legally bind Westport Church in contracts binding the church up to \$10,000. Elder approval is required for contracts in excess of \$10,000.
6. No staff member can hire or fire without the approval of the Lead Pastor.
7. Staff members do not have authority to contractually bind the church.
8. Staff members must get approval from the Lead Pastor for any expense exceeding \$1,000, even for budgeted expenses.

### **Section Three – Gifted by Members / Volunteers**

1. A “member” is a person who has completed Portico and signed the Unity Covenant. Signature on the Unity Covenant affirms a person’s commitment to the following:
  - a. Faith in Christ alone for Salvation
  - b. Baptism as a follower of Christ
  - c. Personal contribution financially and physically
2. Elders reserve the right to review special situations in regard to baptism.
3. Members agree to submit themselves to the spiritual authority of the elders. (1 Peter 5:1-5; Hebrews 13:7)
4. Leadership in any ministry requires membership and staff approval.
5. Non-members who attend Westport are allowed to serve in non-leadership capacities.
6. Discipline & Termination  
Membership may be terminated in the following ways:
  - a. Evidence of stated membership in another church
  - b. Disciplinary action by the elder board

### **Section Four - Beliefs**

#### **The Scriptures:**

We believe that all “Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” by which we understand the whole Bible is inspired in the sense that holy men of God “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the very words of Scripture. We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings—historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic—as appeared in the original manuscripts. We believe that the whole Bible in the originals is therefore without error. We also believe that all the Scriptures were designed for our practical instruction.

#### **The Godhead:**

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience.

#### **Humanity:**

We believe that man was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, and that he fell through sin, and, as a consequence of his sin, lost his spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and that he became subject to the power of the devil. We also believe that this spiritual death, or total depravity of human nature, has been transmitted to the entire human race of man, the Man Christ Jesus alone being

excepted; and hence that every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature which not only possesses no spark of divine life, but is essentially and unchangeably bad apart from divine grace.

**The Savior:**

We believe that, as provided and purposed by God and as preannounced in the prophecies of the Scriptures, the eternal Son of God came into this world that He might manifest God to men, fulfill prophecy, and become the Redeemer of a lost world. To this end He was born of the virgin, and received a human body and a sinless human nature. We believe that, according to the Scriptures, He arose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died, and that His resurrection body is the pattern of that body which ultimately will be given to all believers.

**Salvation:**

We believe that, owing to universal death through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again; and that no degree of reformation however great, no attainments in morality however high, no culture however attractive, no baptism or other ordinance however administered, can help the sinner to take even one step toward heaven; but a new nature imparted from above, a new life implanted by the Holy Spirit through the Word, is absolutely essential to salvation, and only those thus saved are sons of God.

**Further Statements:**

These statements are not exhaustive; they are given in order to emphasize the foundations of our faith. The Holy Scriptures will be the final authority in all matters of faith.

**Section Five - Amendments**

The By-Laws may be amended by the Board of Elders at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Elders.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto subscribed our names this 4<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2009.

  
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Robert Pollock

  
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Paul Henry