

# **Constitution Wilmington Baptist Association**

(adopted October 11, 2016)

## **PREAMBLE**

We declare and establish this Constitution to govern the Wilmington Baptist Association in orderly manner as established in 1 Corinthians 14:40, while pursuing its purpose of serving as a resource and encouragement to every affiliated congregation as together we pursue the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

## **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this Association will be the Wilmington Baptist Association, hereafter known as the “WBA” or “Association”.

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

Section 1. Purposes. The WBA is organized exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes. In its operations, the WBA shall pursue the mission statement, which shall be “Churches partnering to fulfill the great commission.”

Section 2. No Private Inurement. No part of the assets or net earnings of the WBA shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, any director or officer of the WBA or any private individual (except that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered to or for the WBA affecting one or more of its purposes and benefits may be conferred that are in conformity with those purposes), and no team member, director or officer of the WBA or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the Associational assets on dissolution of the Association.

Section 3. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles of Constitution, the WBA shall not conduct or carry on any activity not permitted to be conducted or carried on by an organization exempt from federal income tax under Sections 501 (a) and 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and the regulations issued thereunder (the “Code and Regulations”) or by an organization contributions to which are deductible under the Code and Regulations.

Section 4. Dissolution. Upon the dissolution of the Association, the Trustees shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all the liabilities of the Association, dispose of all the assets of the Association by transferring the same to such other organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, or educational purposes that are consistent with the purposes set forth in Section 1 above as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c)(3) of

the Code and Regulations, as the members of the Association shall determine and direct the board of directors.

### **ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH**

Christ and Scripture – the living and written Word of God respectively – shall be the source of our beliefs and basis of our fellowship as well as The Baptist Faith and Message, any version adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention (currently 1925, 1963, 2000, or as adopted in the future). The Baptist Faith and Message expresses the doctrinal positions of the Association.

### **ARTICLE IV - MEMBERS**

Section 1. Membership. The WBA shall have one class of members. The membership of the WBA shall consist of Churches (Southern Baptist, other Baptist churches, and other New Testament churches of like faith and practice) which are in agreement with and willing to commit to the mission, ministries, and programs of the WBA, maintain New Testament practices and desire to join like-minded churches.

Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, Baptist churches are completely free and sovereign to conduct their business as they see fit. The same goes for Baptist Associations. Membership in this Association, therefore, does not confer to the Association any authority over member churches.

Affiliation between churches and the Association, being free and voluntary, is predicated only on acceptance of the mission and doctrinal positions set forth in this constitution and on active, cooperative participation. Active Cooperative participation includes:

1. Participation in activities of the WBA, at the discretion of each member church,
2. Prayer for the mission and ministry of partner churches,
3. Financial contribution, at the discretion of each member church,
4. Annual reporting (church profile).

Section 2. Becoming a Member. Churches may become members of the WBA as follows:

- (a) A church may seek, upon official church action, to affiliate with the WBA, by presenting a letter of petition to the Director of Missions (Associational Missionary) or an Officer of the Association. This information shall be forwarded to the Membership Team for study and recommendation. The Membership Team shall take appropriate steps to determine whether applicants evidence suitable compatibility with the Association in spirit and doctrine. The Membership Team shall report a favorable or unfavorable recommendation to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall then decide whether to grant watch-care status of one (1) year; a status that

carries with it the same rights and privileges as full members with the exceptions of voting and holding office.

- (b) When a mission has been established under the sponsorship of a member church, and is ready to constitute as a church, the member church in agreement of the mission, shall request a review by the Membership Team. After review, the Membership Team may report a favorable or unfavorable recommendation for either full membership or watch-care status of the mission/ new church to the Executive Committee.
- (c) A two-thirds (2/3<sup>rd</sup>) majority of members of the Executive Committee present and voting in an Executive Committee meeting shall be required to accept a church into watch-care or a mission into full membership.
- (d) Membership or Watch-care status approved by the Executive Committee shall be put into effect immediately. Membership and Watch-care status shall be ratified or revoked by messengers voting at the next Annual Session of the WBA and also requires a two-thirds majority vote of messengers present and voting. Watch-care status may be waived for churches that petition for membership and have actively participated in a sister Baptist Association, upon recommendation of the Membership Team.

Section 3. Voluntary Termination of Membership. Any member church shall be entitled to terminate its membership upon its own request. See Section 2, which shall guide re-admission to membership. The waiting period (watch-care status) may be waived upon recommendation of the Membership Team.

Section 4. Withdrawal of Membership. In the event that it becomes apparent that a church has withdrawn fellowship from the WBA or that a church should be removed from membership, the Membership Team shall make recommendation to the Executive Committee. Vote to withdraw membership shall be by two-thirds (2/3<sup>rd</sup>) majority vote of Executive Committee members present and voting. Recommendation approved by the Executive Committee must be ratified by the messengers present and voting in the WBA Annual Session. The vote in Annual Session must also be by two-thirds majority of messengers present and voting in the WBA Annual Session.

Section 5. Member Obligations. Every member church is expected to contribute to the mission/purpose of the Association by financial support, by prayer support, by recommending persons to serve on committees and/or teams and who can assist with programs of the Association, and by submitting statistical information on at least an annual basis.

Section 6. Voting. Each member church of the WBA shall be entitled to vote at all Annual and Called meetings of the Association in Session through messengers selected to represent each member church in accordance with the provisions in the WBA By-laws. Further, each member church of the WBA shall be entitled to vote at all scheduled and called meetings of the Executive Committee through the representation of two Executive Committee members from each church (the pastor, or pastoral representative and a lay-representative).

#### **ARTICLE V – Messengers to the Executive Committee and Annual Session**

All congregations holding full membership in the Association may send up to ten (10) messengers to the WBA in Session, as directed in the By-laws and up to two (2) members to the Executive Committee.

#### **ARTICLE VI – PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

The manner in which business is conducted in the WBA shall be determined first and foremost by the *Bible. Robert's Rules of Order*, in its latest edition, shall be used as needed.

#### **ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended at any Annual Meeting of the Association by a two-thirds (2/3<sup>rd</sup>) vote of the messengers present and voting, providing the proposed changes be presented in writing and approved in a previous Executive Committee meeting or at a specially called meeting for that purpose. The proposed amendments shall be provided and included in the Book of Reports given out at the Annual Meeting.