

WESTERVILLE BIBLE CHURCH
ABBREVIATED DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, the infallible and only rule of faith and practice.
2. We believe in one God existing in three persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — co-equal and eternal.
3. We believe that man was created in innocence, but fell in Adam, and is now totally unable to remedy his lost condition.
4. We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins.
5. We believe in the eternal salvation of the believer and the eternal judgment of all who reject Jesus Christ.
6. We believe that Christ instituted the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper to be observed until He comes.
7. We believe it is the responsibility of all who are saved to seek to win others to Christ.

CONSTITUTION
WESTERVILLE BIBLE CHURCH

Westerville Bible Church is an institution free from any denominational control. Her members, aware of the prevailing apostasy in denominations, have separated themselves therefrom, in the spirit of II Corinthians 6:14–18. This Church is established to preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and to “contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.”

ARTICLE 1. NAME

The name of this Church shall be “*WESTERVILLE BIBLE CHURCH*.”

ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Westerville Bible Church* shall be the salvation of souls; the edification of the saints through the teaching of God's Word; God-centered worship; the worldwide proclamation of God's saving grace, in keeping with Christ's great commission; the defense of the “faith once delivered to the saints”; and cooperation with such Christian activities as function in harmony with God's Holy Word.

ARTICLE 3. DOCTRINE

1. **The Holy Scriptures:** We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God breathed (II Tim. 3:16–17; II Peter 1:20–21; Matt. 5:18; John 16:12–13).
2. **The Godhead:** We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfection (Deut. 6:4; II Cor. 13:14).
3. **The Person and Work of Christ:**
 - a. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God; having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (John 1:1, 2, 14; Luke 1:35).
 - b. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal physical resurrection from the dead (Rom. 3:24, 25; I Peter 2:24; Eph. 1:7; I Peter 1:3–5).
 - c. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9, 10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; I John 2:1, 2).
4. **The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit:**
 - a. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ, indwelling, and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8–11; II Cor. 3:6, I Cor. 12:12–14; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13–14).
 - b. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth; and, that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (John 16:13; I John 2:20, 27; Eph. 5:18).
5. **The Total Depravity of Man:** We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and, that man is totally depraved, and of himself utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Gen. 1:26–27; Rom. 3:22–23, 5:12; Eph. 2:1–3, 12).
6. **Salvation:** We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (Eph. 2:8–10; John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; I Peter 1:18–19).
7. **The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers:**
 - a. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37–40; 10:27–30; Rom. 8:1; 8:38–39; I Cor. 1:4–8; I Peter 1:5).

- b. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word; which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh (Rom. 13:13–14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11–15).
- 8. The Two Natures of the Believer:** We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provisions made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and, that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural (Rom. 6:13; 8:12–13; Gal. 5:16–25; Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:10; I Peter 1:14–16; I John 3:5–9).
- 9. Separation:** We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commended by God (II Tim. 3:1–5; Rom 12:1–2; 13:14; I John 2:15–17; II John 9–11; II Cor. 6:14–7:1).
- 10. Missions:** We believe that is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; II Cor. 5:19–20).
- 11. The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts:**
- a. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and, that the gifts of evangelist, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and, that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established (I Cor. 12:4–11; II Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7–12, I Cor 13:8).
- b. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and afflicted (John 15:7; I John 5:14–15).
- 12. The Church:**
- a. We believe that the Church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age (Eph. 1:22–23; 5:25–27; I Cor. 12:12, 14; II Cor. 11:2).
- b. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28–32; I Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–11).
- 13. Baptism:** We believe immersion to be the New Testament form of baptism to be administered upon the personal acceptance and public confession of Christ as Savior. Baptism in our church, therefore, shall be administered by immersion only. We believe Christ Himself established and commended the ordinance to symbolize the believer's death to the old life of sin and his spiritual resurrection to the new life in Christ (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 9:18; 10:47–48; Rom. 6:3–6).
- 14. Dispensationalism:** We believe in the dispensational view of Bible interpretation but reject the extreme teaching known as "Hyper Dispensationalism" such as that teaching which opposes either the Lord's table or water baptism as a scriptural means of testimony for the Church in this age (Matt. 28:19–20; Acts 2:41–42; 18:8; I Cor. 11:23–26).

15. The Personality of Satan: We believe that Satan is a Person, the author of sin and the cause of the fall; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and, that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6–7; Isa. 14:12, 17; Matt. 4:2–11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

16. The Second Advent of Christ: We believe in that “Blessed Hope” the personal, imminent, pretribulation, and premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth, with His saints, to establish His Millennial Kingdom (I Thess. 4:13–18; Zech. 14:4–11; Rev. 19:11–16; 20:1–6; I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 3:10).

17. The Eternal State:

- a. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28–29; 11:25–26; Rev. 20:5–6, 12–13).
- b. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Luke 23:43; Rev. 20:4–6; II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; I Thess. 4:16–17).
- c. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne of Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment (Luke 16:19–26; Matt. 25:41–46; II Thess. 1:7–9; Jude 6–7; Mark 9:43–48; Rev. 20:11–15).

18. Creation — We believe that God created the heavens, earth, and all living things in six consecutive literal days (Gen. 1:1,5,8,13,19,23,31; Ex. 20:11; 31:17) and that living things were made to reproduce according to their kinds (Gen. 1:11,12,21,24,25) and did not come into existence by some process of macroevolution, and, that the Bible outlines a young earth history with an age of thousands, not millions, of years (Gen. 5,11; 1 Chron. 1; Matt. 1) which, along with the Fall, explains the origin of death as a consequence of sin (Gen 3; Rom. 5:12–14).

19. Marriage and Family — We believe that God created humans, male and female, in His image. Human life and unchangeable sexual identity begin at conception. At creation, marriage was established by God as a covenant relationship between a man and a woman for the benefit and continuation of mankind. God reserves sexual intimacy for couples having entered into the marriage covenant. (Genesis 1:1–27; 2:7–25; 3:1–24; Psalm 127:3–5; Romans 1:18–32; 1 Cor. 7; Colossians 3:18–19; 1 Thess. 4:3–8).

20. Communion — We believe that the Lord's Supper is a commanded ordinance in the New Testament scriptures that is to be preceded by self-examination. It is a representation of believers' communion with Christ and with one another. The elements are only symbolic, representing the body and blood of Christ. Our participation in this ordinance commemorates his death until he comes. (Matt. 26:26–28; Luke 22:19–21; 1 Cor. 11:23–30)

ARTICLE 4. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Any person who has accepted Christ as a personal Savior; who gives assurance of a desire to live a consistent Christian life; who has received or gives assurance of willingness to receive, the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; and who gives assurance of a willingness to abide by the Constitution and accepts the doctrinal statement of this Church, shall be eligible for membership.

Section 2. Persons can be received into the membership only upon confession of faith, or restatement of faith, conditioned upon an examination satisfactory to the Session.

Section 3. Members are expected conscientiously to strive to live according to light revealed to them by the Holy Spirit through God's Word, and wholeheartedly to support the services and activities of the Church as God may reveal His will to them.

Section 4. The Session shall revise the membership rolls of the Church periodically, at which time inactive members shall be notified before being removed from membership. Further, the Session may at any time, for what it deems good cause, upon notice to the member concerned and after opportunity for hearing, drop any person from the membership rolls.

Section 5. We extend the privileges of "associate membership" to those who are away from home and who are temporarily located in the Westerville area. Such persons must be members of sister fundamental churches and must meet the same requirements of membership as are demanded of our regular members; i.e., make satisfactory statement of faith before the Session and Congregation and answer such constitutional questions as may be propounded by Pastor and Session. Such membership entitles "associate members" to all the privileges of work and worship in the Church, including the right to vote in congregational business meetings (excepting only the right to hold office on official boards of the Church). Such members shall be subject to the same discipline and regulations as regular members. Upon removal from the Westerville area, associate members shall be automatically dropped from the associate membership roll. Upon written request to the Session, associate membership may be changed to regular membership at any time, in which case the home church of the individual involved shall be notified so that duplication of membership may be avoided. In every case where an associate member is received into *Westerville Bible Church*, the home church of the individual involved shall be notified and explanation given that such associate membership does not dissolve the membership bond in the home church.

ARTICLE 5. GOVERNMENT

Section 1. The government of the Church is vested in its voting membership. Each member having reached the age of sixteen (16) is entitled to vote in congregational business meetings.

Section 2. The Session, as the executive body of the Congregation, is charged with the government and the spiritual nurture thereof.

Section 3. Any member of the Session may be removed from office at any time by majority vote of the Congregation, taken at any called Congregational Meeting, as provided by Article 8, Section 3.

Section 4. Members of the Session shall be elected following a Sunday morning service of worship, during the month of March. No person shall be considered elected who fails to receive a majority of all votes cast. Nominations for Elder must be made by the Session following the Sunday morning

service of worship, preceding such an election, with the opportunity for additional nominations by the Congregation.

Section 5. The Session shall thoroughly investigate the qualifications of every man nominated for office of Elder. A man shall be considered for the position of an Elder by meeting the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9. The proposed candidates shall be examined by the Session as to their agreement with the doctrinal statement and the standards that may be established by the Church or the Session. No candidate shall be considered for the office of Elder who cannot answer in the affirmative the following questions:

- (1) Have you publicly confessed Christ as personal Savior and experienced the new birth set forth in John 3:3–6?
- (2) Are you in hearty agreement with the doctrinal statement of this Church and with its constitution?
- (3) Are you living a dedicated, prayerful Christian life, especially as regards loyal observance of the moral precepts taught in the Word of God for believers, including: (a) separation from the world in the spirit of I John 2:15–17, James 4:4, and Titus 2:11–15; (b) freedom from membership in oathbound religious or secret social organizations or entangling alliances with unbelievers, and (c) willingness to put out of your life any sin which the Holy Spirit may reveal to you?

Section 6. The Deacons shall serve as the Trustees of the Congregation and Corporation. They shall assist and be under the direction of the Session. There shall be three or more Deacons and they shall be elected in the same manner and time as the Elders. A man shall be considered for the position of a Deacon by meeting the qualifications set forth in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8–13. Any Deacon may be removed from office at any time by majority vote of the Congregation, taken at any called Congregational Meeting, as provided by Article 8, Section 3.

ARTICLE 6. PASTOR AND OFFICERS

Section 1. There shall be elected as officers of the Church four or more Elders and three or more Deacons and, annually, a Congregational Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary. In addition, the Session shall appoint annually the financial officers of the Church, consisting of a Church Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary. A Finance Committee composed of these financial officers, plus additional members of the Church, shall also be appointed annually by the Session. The Pastor, Elders, Deacons, Congregational Officers, together with the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall constitute the officers of the Church.

Section 2. Terms of office for Elders and Deacons shall be not less than three years and not more than four years. An Elder or a Deacon, upon completion of one full term in office, shall not be eligible for re-election to the same office during the year immediately following the expiration of his term. Any vacancy may be filled by the vote of the Congregation, acting in accordance with Article 5, Sections 4, 5 and 6.

Section 3. A Pastor or Associate Pastor may be called upon a majority vote of the Congregation, after recommendation by the Session or by a committee appointed by the Session and Congregation. Pastors shall serve until their pastorates are terminated by death, resignation, or by vote of the Congregation. Pastors shall give a minimum of thirty-days notice before termination of their

services. In event the Congregation votes that the Pastor's or Associate Pastor's services shall be terminated abruptly, the salary involved may continue for up to thirty days.

The Pastoral Staff may be enlarged to include an Assistant Pastor or a Minister of Education, Music, Visitation, Youth, etc. His ministry shall be for a specified time determined by the Congregation at the time of his call, after which it may be reviewed by the Congregation. In all other matters his call and his termination shall be as that of the Pastor or the Associate Pastor.

Section 4. A Pastor's services may be terminated at any time by majority vote of the Congregation, after a fair and impartial hearing under the supervision of the Session, at a meeting called in accordance with Article 8, Section 3.

Section 5. All officers shall serve until their successors take office, except in cases of discipline.

Section 6.

- (a) All regular Sunday School teachers, officers of adult classes, Congregational officers, choir directors, youth workers and the director and superintendents of departments of the Daily Vacation Bible School shall be members of *Westerville Bible Church*.
- (b) The nominating committee for any church organization shall present their report to the Session for approval before submitting it to their constituents.

ARTICLE 7. DUTIES OF PASTORS & OFFICERS

Section 1. The Pastors shall have general oversight of the spiritual life, regular services, and administration of the ordinances of the Church; shall be *ex officio* members of all committee meetings connected with the Church or any of its organizations; and one shall act as Moderator in other meetings of the Session and Church unless otherwise directed by this Constitution or ordered by vote of the Congregation. If at any time a pastor's personal belief, teaching and preaching shall not be in full accord with the doctrinal statement of the Church, his services as Pastor shall be terminated as provided by Article 6, Section 4.

Section 2. The Session is charged with the government, spiritual nurture, and business administration of the Congregation. It belongs to the Session to judge the qualifications of Elders elected, and if approved to ordain and install them in office; to judge the qualifications of Deacons elected, and if approved, to install them in office; to decide upon the qualifications of applicants for membership in the Church, and to certify departing members to other congregations; to watch over the deportment of members of the Congregation; to counsel parents in training their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to administer the ordinances of the Lord's House, and judicially enforce His laws governing the lives of His people; to devise and direct ways and means of leading the people to honor the Lord with their substance; to determine the uses to be made of the Church edifice or attached buildings. The Session shall have the care of the physical property and finances of the Church and shall oversee all the business affairs of the Congregation, preparing an annual budget for submission to the Congregation at its annual meeting. Furthermore, it belongs to the Session to exercise control over the Sunday School and supervise all other organizations and agencies of the Congregation; to direct the service of praise and other ordinances of worship; and to attend to all matters which, in its judgment, pertain to the spiritual welfare of the Congregation. The

members of the Session shall be expected to visit members of the Congregation, giving special attention to the sick and sorrowing.

Section 3. The Deacons shall be the legal representatives of the Congregation in all civil matters. They shall maintain the physical property of the Church and recommend major repairs and improvements to the Session for its approval. The Session as it deems appropriate shall delegate financial authority to the Deacons to execute their responsibilities. They shall secure services of a custodian at such compensation as authorized by the Session and secure acceptable services from him. They shall look after and administer help to the needy of the fellowship. They shall hold themselves in readiness to assist the Pastor(s) and Session in the spiritual life of the Church. They shall conduct regular meetings and keep minutes of the same. They shall elect one of their members as Chairman.

Section 4. The Congregational Chairman shall preside at the annual business meeting of the Congregation. The Moderator of the Session shall preside at all other business sessions except those which may pertain to the Moderator personally, at which times a Vice Moderator, named by the Session, shall preside. The Congregational Secretary shall keep an accurate record of such meeting.

Section 5. The Church Treasurers and the Financial Secretary shall have charge of receiving and recording all money received by the Church and Sunday School. The other members of the Finance Committee shall render assistance as needed in receiving and recording receipts. The Treasurers shall make all disbursements upon authorization of the Session. The Treasurers shall also make monthly written reports of receipts and disbursements to the Session and Annual Reports to the Congregation. The Treasurer shall have custody of all legal papers pertaining to the property and finances of the Church. The accounts shall be audited by the Session annually at the close of the Church year. The financial records shall be available for inspection at all times by the Session.

Section 6. Within one month after each annual Congregational Meeting the Pastor, Elders and Deacons shall be required to affirm and sign the doctrinal statement of the Church, and their signatures shall be filed with the Clerk of the Session.

ARTICLE 8. MEETINGS

Section 1. The fiscal year of the Church shall end on the thirty-first (31st) day of March in each year and the Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held during the month of April, the date to be determined by the Session and announced to the Congregation from the pulpit on two Sundays preceding the meeting.

Section 2. At the Annual Congregational Meeting the minutes of the preceding annual meeting shall be read. The Church Treasurer shall present his financial report and reports shall be presented by the various organizations of the Church and Sunday School. Such other business as may be necessary shall be transacted.

Section 3. Called meetings of the Congregation may be held at the discretion of the Session or upon the written request of 10% of the members of the Church. Notice shall be given as provided for in Article 8, Section 1. No business other than that announced in the notice shall be considered at such called meetings.

Section 4. A majority vote of the voting members present at any constitutionally called Congregational Business Meeting shall be required for the election of officers or to render final decisions in any matter under consideration, except amendments to this Constitution.

ARTICLE 9. ORDINATION

When, in the judgment of the Session, a man in this membership is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the Session to call and conduct a council for ordination, provided such authority is granted by vote of the Church. The ordaining council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their call to the Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief, and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service. The following shall not be ordained to the ministry: those who have not served six months as Pastor, Assistant Pastor, or in definite Christian work in such manner as to convey reasonable evidence of God's call to the ministry; those who are addicted to the use of intoxicating liquors, drugs or tobacco in any form; or those who belong to secret societies, or who bring disrepute upon their ministry through worldly practices and associations (Romans 12:1–2; 11 Cor. 6:14–18; James 4:4; I John 2:15).

It shall be within the province of the Session to discipline, even to revoke the ordination credentials of any minister ordained under this Constitution, if the said minister is found guilty of any of the above practices after an impartial trial conducted in the spirit of I Corinthians 13. The minister under trial shall have the privilege of appealing his case to the Congregation within thirty days after decision of the session.

ARTICLE 10. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at any regular or called Congregational Meeting, provided the proposed amendment has been printed and distributed to the Congregation at each regular Church service for the two Sundays preceding said meeting.

A STATEMENT OF OUR MISSIONARY POLICY

1. Prospective missionary candidates should be able to give full assent to the statement of faith contained in our Church Constitution.
2. Such candidates should hold sympathetically and without reserve, the position of their home church with respect to complete separation from apostasy and any entanglements, therewith. Those who could go as easily and without compunctions of conscience under the old-line denominational mission boards, could hardly qualify as taking the position of Westerville Bible Church in matters of Biblical Separation. The Session will take into consideration the work and testimony of the individual in the home field as an indication of his or her attitude toward Scriptural separation.
3. It shall be expected that our prospective missionary candidates, desiring the prayerful and financial support of their home church, shall seek to go to the fields of their call under such

missionary boards and agencies as are in essential accord with our Statement of Faith. They should be agencies free from all connections with the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches and the National Association of Evangelicals or such other organizations as may work in harmony therewith.

The above is printed for the guidance of prospective missionary candidates and the information of members and friends of Westerville Bible Church.

OUR CHURCH COVENANT

We, the members of the *Westerville Bible Church*, do covenant together, God helping us, that as strangers and pilgrims we will abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; that we will put away from us all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, and be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us; that as we have opportunity we will do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith; that we will remember them which have the rule over us, who speak unto us the Word of God; and that we will give as God hath prospered us; not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.